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THE WHEEL OF DESTINY

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THE WHEEL OF DESTINY

A Story of Love and Adventure

BY

SAMUEL H. BOROFSKY

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To

JOSEPH J. CORBETT

Citizen, Lawyer and Judge, whose enlightened mind and generous views have helped to instill in me hope of the ultimate emancipation of mankind from all racial and religious prejudices and in the triumph of the Brotherhood of Man.

This Book is Inscribed
With Sincere Esteem and Appreciation.

FOREWORD

As this book goes to press the revolution in Russia of March, 1917, seems an assured fact. It is to be hoped that conditions prevalent in that country as described in this narrative, will, under the new régime, have passed as a horrible nightmare never to return.

THE AUTHOR.

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PART I

COURTNEY'S STORY

THE WHEEL OF DESTINY

CHAPTER I

SHOWING THAT SOME SPOKES ARE AWRY

Grouch is the child o' captain wrong
Cradled by thunderous storms
Instead o' song.

COUNTLESS volumes have been written of the work and adventures of the human sleuths—that vast army of men and women engaged in the investigation of crime, both public and private. Very little, however, if anything is ever heard of the doings of that great army dealing with the intricate frailties and temptations of human life—the legal profession.

As a matter of fact the lawyer comes nearer to and is more intimately connected with the daily affairs of mankind than any other calling in which human ingenuity is engaged. And if the walls, which encompass the sanctuaries of the ministers of the law, had the sense of hearing and the power of action it could record, no doubt, the most gruesome, the most touching, revolting, entrancing, entertaining, interesting and thrilling reading, that was ever put to writing.

Fortunately, perhaps, for the human race the walls of the law offices have on the whole, notwithstanding the eavesdropping propensities of the modern dictograph, remained earless. Furthermore, communications made to attorneys and counsellors at law are legally privileged. So that ordinarily that which transpires, or is voiced, within the holy of holies of the average law office is seldom, if ever, known or heard beyond its confines.

It is only occasionally, when the majesty of the law in the guise of its police department takes a hand, or when hearings are held in open court, or when the emissaries of the press on a hunt for headlines enter the sleuthing ranks, or when the parties to a cause or an action are not adverse to publicity, that the public becomes informed of that which would otherwise remain forever buried in the secret vaults of the legal profession.

Thus, the story of "The Wheel of Destiny" would never have been written if the parties most vitally interested, and who were some of the main characters in this most interesting drama, had not sanctioned its production. Indeed, the human qualities of good and evil which it reveals so appealed to some of the participants that they consented to contribute a written recital of their share in the adventure.

Not unlike many matters of import in the world's history, the incidents and coincidents whch gave rise to our story were quite insignificant in their inception, and apparently irrelevant to each other.

It began with the advent of John Brown, a most common appellation you will say, and most likely borne by as ordinary an individual. And so thought

I, when Miss Muirhead, my stenographer, unceremoniously announced my visitor's name as she ushered him into my private office, which was then located in Counsellors' Hall, Boston.

No sooner, however, did I withdraw my eyes from a perusal of my early morning mail and met those of Mr. Brown taking my measure, as it were, over the brims of his gold rimmed spectacles, but what I came to a different conclusion.

"Surely," thought I, as I surveyed the figure of the man facing me, his deep, piercing black eyes penetrating their way into mine, "surely, this can be no ordinary character, notwithstanding the name."

His genteel—almost clerical garb, the close standup white collar, the wide black cravat, the modest soft black felt hat and the walking stick upon which his right hand rested, all tended to do their part, to make one take notice. Yet what attracted—fascinated me almost, was the characteristically semitic features with the remarkable contour of the head and face. A mass of wavy hair, that must have been jet black in its day but was now well streaked with gray, lay lightly and smoothly upon the head and formed on his rather oval face, the full grown beard, which ended up in a somewhat sharp point under the chin. His forehead was markedly wide and the long sharp nose, which came in a straight line from beneath the parting of the eyebrows, then to a rakish angle at the point, lifting with it, as it were, the lower part of the face, reminded one very much of the bowsprit of an old clipper ship, or that of the modern torpedo boat destroyer. "A most remarkable face," I thought, "and so incompatible

with the name of John Brown" that I marveled at the incongruity of the combination.

"Mr. Frederick W. Courtney?" he questioned, glancing down to a slip of paper which he held in his left hand and then back to me again.

I acknowledged my identity and motioned my visitor to a seat at the side of my desk, which he accepted.

"What can I do for you, Mr. Brown?" I inquired in turn.

My prospective client did not reply to my query immediately, but remained silent for several moments holding my gaze. It seemed as though he was reading me in turn and mentally debating the result of the information thus acquired.

"I want," said he at last, breaking the silence, "to engage your services to locate for me the whereabouts of a family named Prensky—or rather," he amended, "to be more specific, the head of that family, Pinchus Prensky."

"Why," replied I in great surprise, "that sort of practice is not in my line. I am not a detective, I am a lawyer."

"Yes," he concurred, nodding his head affirmatively. "Yes, I know that—I know you are a lawyer, yet, just the same, I should like to have you undertake this matter for me."

"But why don't you go to a detective agency for that sort of thing?" I insisted, not liking the idea of going in on the proposition and yet desiring to be courteous to my visitor.

"I have tried detectives all right," replied Brown, with a depreciatory wave of the hand, "I have tried

some of them, both in New York and Philadelphia. It wasn't any use. They seemed to want to find out more about me than the parties they were hired to locate. Why," he continued with a sort of a quizzical smile, "some of them tried to follow me about."

"Pardon me, Mr. Brown," I said apologetically, "if I am not mistaken, you are of the Hebrew race."

"Yes," he replied, nodding his head and smiling, "I am Jewish all right."

"And the family you are seeking to locate are of the same race? Am I correct?" I questioned again.

He nodded his head again to signify the correctness of my surmise.

"Well then," I continued, "that being so and if you'd rather have a lawyer handle the matter for you, why not employ one from among your own people? I should think he would be more helpful to you in a case of this kind than I could be. Why don't you try one of them?"

"I know all that," he replied, smiling broadly. "I have tried them too. The Jewish lawyers are all right and mean well. But then, you see, in a way I've found the same trouble with them as with the detectives. They must know everything. I've got to tell 'em what I want the Prensky family for; and they must know all about me—my name isn't enough for them. No, they must know my whole history, and because I wouldn't tell them, they put me off and off and do nothing."

"Well," I demanded somewhat impatiently, "why don't you tell them? It's only reasonable," I insisted, "that in a matter of this kind they should

want to be fully informed."

"What!" he cried, suddenly enraged and glaring at me with fire in his eyes. "What! You want that I should tell 'em who I am? I—I," he faltered, and then passionately, "Don't you suppose I have suffered enough as it is? Do you think I am going to give the Russian demons an opportunity to know my whereabout? Why, man," he continued, with suppressed emotion, rising to his feet and grasping the top edge of the desk as if for support, "I have been through hell on earth in the Siberian mines—a prisoner. Do you understand what that is?" he demanded with emphasis. "Do you understand what it is to be a prisoner there? Torture is no name for what I have undergone; slavery is but a phrase—a word in comparison. A hounded, homeless mongrel dog leads a better life. I escaped from all that—escaped from under the iron heel that was crushing me body and soul. Am I now to make myself known and give them the chance to pursue me again? Ach, man, Mr. Courtney," he remonstrated, breaking off into dialect in his excitement, "ach, man, is this the advice you would give me? No, sir, Mr. Courtney. I am John Brown to you and everybody else—nothing more." Then, as if his breath was spent by the outburst, he stopped. Taking a handkerchief from his pocket he mopped the beads of perspiration that had welled up and gathered on his forehead.

Meantime I sat there watching him, entirely too much surprised for the moment for words.

"Besides," said he presently, resuming his seat, and apparently calm again, "besides, I don't see

why you should hesitate to take my case; I am an American citizen and Mr. Endicott, who gave me your name, will be good for my honesty."

"Mr. Endicott," I questioned, "what Mr. Endicott?"

"Mr. George Endicott," he replied. "Mr. Endicott and myself," he went on to explain, "have done business together and we are good friends. I told him about this and he advised me to come to you. He said you had many Jewish clients and that you could help me."

I sat for a while thoughtfully considering the matter. I knew George Endicott very well. He was an old college chum of mine and a corking good fellow. If he had business relations with Brown and saw fit to direct him to me, then the fellow must undoubtedly be all right. Still, there were some parts in Brown's story that were very perplexing—that I could not very well understand—and needed explaining.

"Mr. Brown," I said, "Mr. Endicott is a good friend of mine and your story interests me. And although the work you are asking me to undertake for you is not, as I have told you, particularly in my line, yet I may decide to help you, if that be possible. But first, I would like to know why—seeing that you are an American citizen and an honest man—why should you fear the Russian Government? You are in America now, not in Russia."

"Ah," he replied, thoughtfully, "I see you don't understand. My being a citizen of this country makes no difference to them. They don't recognize it. They follow their victims everywhere. They

have their spies everywhere—they have them here. If once found, they will hound me and mine to the end of eternity."

"Well," I remarked, "it is pretty difficult for one who is not familiar with the conditions you have stated to realize their severity. However, I think I understand you better now and shall do what I can to assist you. Now tell me," I continued interrogatively, "what is your purpose in seeking to locate this Prensky family—what is it you want with them?"

"Don't ask me just yet," he pleaded. "Maybe I can tell you all when you find them for me—but not just yet."

"Very well, then," I acquiesced, "but perhaps you can tell me something about them. What they are like? Where they come from? Perhaps you can give me your reason for believing that these people are likely to be in these parts? For, I do not recall," I urged, endeavoring to elicit some information that might prove helpful, "I do not recall having met or heard of the parties you have named."

"Pinchus Prensky," replied Brown retrospectively, in a somewhat subdued tone of voice, "comes from a small town in Russia called Drashnishok. It must be more than twenty years since I saw him last. At that time he was maybe twenty-eight or twenty-nine years old. His wife was a still younger woman. Then, there were the children, they were quite young too—very small children. But all that happened that day was so terrible and so confusing that not everything is clear to my mind. You see there was also—there was—there was—was," he seemed to

hesitate and falter, and to find great difficulty in articulating—he swallowed hard once or twice, and then suddenly his head dropped into the palms of his hands, from which ensued stifling sobs. His heavy frame shook and quivered with the agonized emotion of a strong man in the throes of a great grief.

I waited in silence until the paroxysms would be over, greatly moved by the man's evident sorrow. Presently he raised his head with its tear-stained face and red eyes.

"Excuse me," he said rising, "I am very sorry. I didn't think I would mind it so very much, until I began to think about that time and it all comes back to me. Well, anyway, you try and see what you can do," he urged. "I feel sure they're around here somewheres."

Then taking a card from a wallet he laid it in front of me on the desk. "This," he said, "is the name of my banker in New York; that's where my home is just now—in New York. You can draw on me any time if you need to have some money. You can also write to me to the same address when you get some news, and if I am away they'll forward the same to me."

By this time I had also risen and we shook hands cordially and bade each other good-bye, I promising, as he was departing, to do all that I could, and he to patiently await the outcome of my efforts. Yet, as I heard his retreating footsteps in the corridor I was not at all sanguine about the success of the undertaking.

CHAPTER II

THE INVITATION

"I do not want a wreath of flowers placed upon the head of the Jew, but I want you to know him as he is."—DISRAELI.

THE events which marked the day on which John Brown paid me that memorable visit were unusual in more ways than one. The weather, too, seemed to have taken a freakish turn—most remarkably warm for that time of year—early March. The warmth of the early morning turned into a sultry, muggy afternoon, more like a day in August than one in March. As I wended my way home the clouds began to gather and a storm threatened.

The stress of business during the remainder of the day after Brown's departure precluded my giving his matter more than passing attention. Before leaving for home, however, it occurred to me that after all it would be much better, perhaps, if I called in some one to assist me; some one who was more experienced than I with the work of tracing lost persons. I did not share the qualms of my client in doing this, for there was no need, of course, of my disclosing his identity to any one.

In going over the list of names of those whom I

knew to be engaged in that line of work I hit upon the name of Thomas Judkins, a near neighbor of mine, who had formerly been an inspector on the regular force, but was now retired and doing private work on his own account. Desiring to save time I called Mr. Judkins on the phone and suggested his coming over to the house that evening for a professional chat; to which he readily agreed. Consequently the mystery of John Brown's quest followed me home and kept recurring to me over and over again with added force until my thoughts were entirely taken up with it.

I was thus preoccupied at dinner when my wife broached the subject of our accepting an invitation to an engagement party for the following Sunday evening.

"An engagement party?" I inquired, knowing that such festivities were not exactly in vogue within our own circle. "Who are the happy pair?"

"Miss Minnie Morgelefsky and a young man from New York," Ethel replied. "Minnie is the eldest daughter of the Morgelefskys' that we knew on Beacon Park. You may perhaps remember them."

"Oh, yes," I said, "I remember the family quite well. There was the father, Philip Morgelefsky, a sandy-haired, sandy-bearded man of about forty-five; I found him very pleasant whenever we met. Then there was Mrs. Morgelefsky, a petite, brown-haired lady with dark blue eyes; two or three girls—I don't remember meeting any of the girls though—and a boy, a likely fellow of about twenty, then attending Technology."

"Yes, I thought you would remember them," remarked Ethel. "Shall we go?"

I did not reply immediately, my mind becoming diverted for a moment with Brown's matter.

"Don't you care to go, Fred?" Ethel questioned, taking my temporary silence for hesitancy. "I'd love to go; we used to be such dear friends, and besides," she added as a clincher, "they really are very nice people even if they are Jews."

I could almost see Brown's broad smile as Ethel said this and I laughed. I really couldn't help it.

"Why, Fred, what are you laughing at?" remonstrated Ethel. "Don't you think they are nice? Why I think they're just lovely," she added with some fervor and without giving me time to reply for myself.

"My dear Ethel," I said, "I was not laughing at the idea of the Morgelefskys' being nice. I haven't the least doubt about that; but what amused me was the way in which you put it. Even in the goodness of your heart, my dear, you were unable to escape that human snobbishness of superiority so common to most all of us."

Ethel actually blushed with chagrin. "Why, Fred!" she exclaimed.

I laughed again, and rising, leaned over and kissed her.

"Ethel, dear," I apologized, "don't think for a moment that I was chiding you. Your expressions concerning the Morgelefskys were simply the ordinary and usual small talk amongst our set when discussing the Jewish people. I was only amused with the idea that you could not escape it."

"But, Fred, dear," Ethel protested, "you know, don't you, that most of our people do not consider them our equals and—and—rather discourage our mingling with them socially? Now isn't that so? Some call them unscrupulous."

"Well," I replied, becoming serious, and again Brown's smile seemed to haunt me, "but does mere prejudice justify one's assumption of superiority? I should say not. And when it comes to unscrupulousness, I am afraid, if Shakespeare were alive today he would hesitate—considering the great fortunes accumulated by non-Jews—to portray Shylock as of the Semitic race."

"Have you been preaching these doctrines to your club members, Fred?" inquired Ethel with a smile.

"You may be sure they get it good and strong if they start anything."

Ethel laughed, then came over and kissed me. "So it is all settled about our accepting the Morgelefskys' invitation for next Sunday evening?"

"Why, certainly," I assented. "Accept, by all means."

I had hardly finished dinner when Tom Judkins was announced. We proceeded to the library, where, after lighting cigars, I explained to him what I wanted.

Tom was a large, slow, methodical person and yet he was considered, during his time, one of the best men on the force.

"Pinchus Prensky—Prensky," he repeated thoughtfully, "a Hebrew, I take it. Don't seem as I ever come across him. What's he been up to—what's his specialty?"

I laughed.

"Why, nothing in particular, I guess. I just want to find him."

"Oh, I see; heir?"

"I don't know whether he is or not, Tom," I explained. "I just want to locate him for a client of mine."

Tom puffed away at his cigar for a while.

"Know what your client wants him for, Fred?" he asked again presently.

"No, I can't say."

"Know him long—I mean your client?"

"Why, no, Tom. It's a fellow that blew into the office this morning very anxious to locate this man Prensky or his family. I never saw him before."

"My advice to you, Fred," said Tom, stoically chewing and puffing away at his cigar, "is not to have anything to do with it at all unless your client can give you satisfactory grounds as to what he wants to find this Hebrew for. Maybe it's one of them gangsters who, after being sent up for some job and getting free, is now looking to lay the chap stiff that's helped to send him away."

That set me thinking.

"Not knowing the parties," continued Tom, "I'll bet dollars to doughnuts your client has served time."

"Supposing he has," I argued, "that does not make it at all certain that he wants to harm the man. He may have intrusted him with some secret, or—or it may be a family matter."

"Well, if it's legit why don't he tell you? You don't want to get yourself mixed up in a murder,

do you?"

"Look here, Tom Judkins," I rejoined, "I have promised to see this thing through and I am going to do it. I have sized my man up and I'll take a chance on him. But what we can do is this: If we locate Prensky we need not make his whereabouts known to my client until we are sure there is no harm to be done. What do you say to that? Is it a go?"

"All right, Fred," he rumbled. "I'm on. Makes no difference to me; it was your end I was thinking about."

"All right, then, go right after it."

"Very well," he replied, rising to go and shaking hands. "I'll start first thing in the morning and will let you know as soon as there's anything doing."

Shortly after, while I was in the library reading, I heard the pattering of little feet and presently our little boy Billy, age three years and a half, came scampering to my knees and raised two great round inquiring eyes to mine.

"Daddy, what is a zew-man?" he questioned.

I sat the child on my knees and fondled him, his round eyes never leaving my face. Mrs. Courtney, who had just entered the room, glanced at me inquiringly, and Delia, the maid, stood at the door with a broad grin on her face.

"Daddy," insisted the boy, with childish awe in his voice, "what is a zew-man?"

"Why does my little man want to know?" I countered.

"Delia sayth if I don't go to thleep, Daddy, a zew-man will catch me. What is a zew-man, Daddy?"

"Delia was only fooling," I said.

"Oh," commented the little chap with an evident attempt to go and have it out with the maid. I held him back, however.

"Does Billy remember Mr. Hirsch?"

Hirsch Starmanow, who was but a casual acquaintance some three years ago, was now our pet hobby.

"Does Billy remember Mr. Hirsch?" I repeated.

Affirmative nodding of Billy's head.

"Well, son, Mr. Hirsch is a Jew-man. Does Billy like Mr. Levy, the man with the glasses?" Further affirmative nodding, a smile and a "Yes, Daddy," from Billy. (Mr. Levy was a brother attorney who called to see me occasionally and who loved to fondle and tease the boy.) "Well, Buffalo Billy boy, Mr. Levy is another Jew-man." Another "Oh" from Billy and this time he did escape my knees and made for Delia at double quick time.

"Delia," I called, "I don't like to have the child instilled with fear of any one. Just let him go to sleep naturally the next time, please."

"Sure suhr, faith an' I mint no harm at all, at all," apologized Delia, valiantly attempting to mollify the belligerent Billy. "I was only foolin' an' all I had in moind was the ragman, anyway."

"Well," said I, addressing Ethel as the terms for a declaration of peace between Billy and Delia came wafting to us, "there it is—the whole trouble begins at the cradle. An unreasonable fear and hatred for the proscribed race is inbred in the child from the cradle up. Yet through all the generations that this has been going on, Christianity has been building its religion and civilization upon the literature and

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teachings propounded by the men of that race. Ragman, indeed; why, the chances are that the ragman this girl has in mind is perhaps as well versed in ancient lore, if not better, than we are."

"Fred," commented Ethel, "you don't suppose that you are going to change all that by yourself, do you?"

"No," I replied, laughing, "not unless I become Managing Director of the Society for the Promotion of the Millennium with all Christendom as active members of the Society."

"I don't quite understand," Ethel said, evidently perplexed.

"Neither do I just yet, dear," I replied.

Presently the storm which had threatened during the afternoon and early evening broke forth in all its fury—with thunder, lightning and torrents of rain. Ethel soon retired, and I, desiring to drive from my mind the vexing problems of the day before seeking my pillow, decided to continue reading for a while longer. So, lighting a fresh cigar and stretching myself comfortably in the Morris chair, I made ready to enjoy Mr. Chester's entertaining story of "A Good Business Administration" to the limit. I was destined, however, to be disappointed in this, for no sooner did I begin to experience the enjoyment of the situation when the front door bell rang.

I was minded not to answer at first, thinking that it must have been done by mistake, as we expected no one else that evening, but presently the bell rang again, this time more forcibly.

Annoyed at the interruption, I nevertheless laid my book aside and, getting up, went to open the

door. In passing the clock in the hallway it melodiously chimed the hour of ten.

"Humph!" I soliloquized, "I wonder who it can be at this hour and in such weather." Even the chain rattled its protest as I slid the bolt and opened the door.

To my great surprise the tall, dark form of Hirsch Starmanow loomed in the doorway.

CHAPTER III

An Unexpected Visitor

If love be a craze then all the world is a madhouse.

STARMANOW was the last person whom I should have expected just at this time. His apartment was quite a ways from my home, and the evening was certainly not the kind to be chosen for an unexpected visit without some good reason for it.

After relieving my visitor of his raincoat and umbrella, I conducted him to the library, where I offered him a Morris chair, placed on the table something delectable to drink, some glasses and cigars and invited him to help himself and to make himself comfortable. Aside, however, from accepting the proffered chair, he paid no attention to my offers of hospitality, and sank, rather than sat, down in the chair, rested his elbows on its arms and brought the palms of his hands together as one might do when in deep abstraction. During our acquaintance I had often noticed this tendency on his part to be pensive and dreamy.

He seemed to be in that mood now, only perhaps a little more so. He had no sooner sank down into the chair than his eyes became veiled and he seemed to me, in thought at least, thousands of miles away. I puffed away at my cigar as I watched him and

wondered if something out of the ordinary had happened. I had always found Starmanow a good sort. A man of good parts, on the sunny side of thirty, I knew of nothing—except for his dreamy, melancholy moments, which I came in time to attribute to his poetic leanings and philosophical temperament—that should cause him sorrow. Although there were times when his depression caused me to speculate on the possibility of there being a skeleton in the closet somewhere, sometimes I was inclined to attribute no small part of his peculiarities to that of his vocation—that of dealer in antique arts.

On two or three occasions when I caught him in one of those moods, I thought that perhaps he was entangled in some love affair, but when I jollied him about it, he would wake right up, give me one of his wonderful smiles and laughingly deprecate any such suggestion.

"Oh, no," he would say, "not yet."

"Oh, come now," I'd urge, "you don't mean to tell me that you have reached your age without finding some lady love to make you happy or to torment you, as the case may be?"

Again his face would light up, his pearly teeth peep out beneath his black mustache, his eyes dancing with mischief and merriment as he would reply, "Why, yes, of course, old sport. They torment me sure enough, but there are so many of them that are lovable—God bless them—that I cannot bring myself to the point of giving up the many for the one."

However, that seemed to me to be mere banter. Yet, as time went by and his polite and gracious manner in the presence of ladies continued general,

I was fain to believe that he was still heart whole. You can never be too sure, though. I have known such as he—the undemonstrative kind—before. The first thing one is likely to hear about them is either an announcement of their having wedded the last person you'd expect, or learn through newspaper reports that they had eloped with a girl you knew to be engaged to some one else.

I sat smoking and watching my visitor for quite a while. In fact, I was so absorbed contemplating him, with his dreamy, far away look, that I forgot all count of time until the fire in the stub of my cigar almost burnt the finger tips within which I held it. I became wide-awake with a start and that seemed to wake him up also.

He smiled. "Say, Fred," he said, "going to retire soon?"

"Why, no," I answered, "I am in no hurry. It's a fearful night. I am glad you came. I shall be delighted to have some one to talk to, and the spare room is ready, so you must stay over night."

"To tell you the truth," he said, "I am going to accept your hospitality. I have not been able to sleep for the last few nights, and this evening I became so restless that I wanted to go somewhere, to be with some one, to escape from my dreams, and I could think of no safer refuge and no better comrade to go to than yourself, Fred. That is why I am here."

"Certainly, old man, you did quite right. You know you are welcome here at any time. Come whenever you feel like it."

My sympathy was aroused and I had a feeling

somewhat akin to pity for the apparently lonesome, dreamy man sitting opposite to me. I also felt not a little mystified. The wind outside seemed to have increased in its fury, the lightning flashed frequently, while the thunder alone seemed to be far off in its rumblings. The very atmosphere lent mystery to my visitor's demeanor and sent cold waves down my spine which almost made me shiver. To ward off my uneasiness I got up, and, going to each window, drew the blinds and then sat down again facing my visitor and waited.

I selected a fresh cigar from the box on the table and urged my visitor to help himself to one, as I knew that he smoked. But he shook his head in the negative.

"Take a drink, then," I said, pushing a bottle towards him, "this will wake you up, if anything will."

Again he shook his head in the negative, his eyes staring in front of him, his elbows still resting on the arms of his chair with finger tips touching as if in prayer. "I do not want anything to distract me," he said in a quiet, abstracting tone of voice, "until I have found the face I am looking for."

I sat up in astonishment.

"The face you are looking for," I gasped. "What face?"

"The face I lost the other night," he replied. "A girl's face. The sweetest face I have ever seen or dreamed of."

My eyes were almost staring out of my head with astonishment. He sat there so meditatively, pensive and dreamy-eyed; so love forlorn as it seemed to me, making his confession of love without the

movement of a muscle or the wink of an eyelash that the ludicrousness of the whole situation suddenly struck me with full force and I fell back in my chair and roared with laughter until the tears fairly streamed down my cheeks. Starmanow still maintained his passively abstracted attitude. He paid no attention whatever to my hilarity; he did not even look at me. Not a word of protest came from him; not the slightest indication of resentment. If anything, his body sank deeper into his chair and his head bent lower over his folded hands.

"I congratulate you, old man," I said, as soon as my paroxysm of laughter had somewhat abated and I could sit up. "I congratulate you; I am glad some girl has appealed to you at last; it will do you good. Where did you meet her?"

"Where did I meet her?" he asked, staring at me and showing interest for the first time. "Why, in the Model City."

I jumped up from my chair in amazement. No laughter came from my lips this time. His stare, his words, the look of his eyes seemed so unreal that I was absolutely shocked by the unnatural aspect of the man.

"Hirsch," I said, "where is the Model City? I don't seem to recall it."

"Why, I don't know where it is, Fred," he replied. "I haven't the slightest idea; I only saw it in a dream as I did my lady's face. But while the Model City may be a chimera and I may not be able to locate it, I feel sure that my lady exists; that she is somewhere on this earth, and that I have got to find her. Do you hear, Fred?" he said, looking at me.

"I have got to find her or I'll never have any peace."

"Tell me all about it, old chap," I said, sympathetically, taking a fresh cigar from the box and lighting it.

Starmanow rose from his chair and slowly traversed the room several times, then came back to the table, moved his chair so as to face me, and sat down again.

"Did you attend the recent performance of Aubert's 'Forêt Bleu' at the Boston Opera House?" he asked.

"Why, no," I said, "I did intend to hear it, but as it was given on a Saturday afternoon, when I was exceptionally busy, I had to forego the pleasure. Why, did you attend it?" I asked in turn.

"Yes," he replied, "I did go. I do not know whether you missed much. I suppose," he continued, "it must depend somewhat on one's musical temperament. Personally, I cannot say that I found the music much to my taste. It was almost totally devoid of melody. There were, actually, moments when I could not help but sympathize with the poor Prince and Princess in their efforts to get tuneful music out of their scores. What interested me particularly, however, was the Children and the Ogre in the second act, and the awakening of the Princess in the third act.

"I am not at all certain that the lesson taught by the Children and the Ogre in the second act was as apparent to others as it was to me. I believe I saw more than the mere buffoonery of the Ogre and heard more than the mere music, the joyous shouts of the Children and the laughter of the audience

as the Ogre was led away a captive.

"The Ogre was a huge ruffian with a terrible shock of red hair covering his head and face, a red sash adorned his waist, and the inevitable weapons of the bandit within its folds. He strutted about shod in a pair of substantial boots, awakening the forest with his noisy clatter. He was the living picture of the bully and the tyrant and the terror of the weak and innocent. You know the kind. They are to be found almost anywhere, from monarchs downward. This particular Ogre took a dose too much of something, as a result of which the Children found him napping under a tree. It is always bad for a tyrant to be caught napping, and this one was no exception.

"The Children, somehow, knew the Ogre's vulnerable spot, which happened to be his feet. The first thing they did, therefore, was to remove his boots, and this before he could realize what was being done to him. Lo and behold, when he did awake he had not a leg to stand on, so to speak. He could not run, he could not walk, all he could do was to make motions and hop around. The Children romped about him at will and tied him to a tree. Later he was led away, a helpless captive. All this was accomplished without the shedding even of imaginary blood, and, I may say, almost without any noise, save for the laughter of the audience."

Starmanow stopped, and, resting his elbows on the table, he fell into deep meditation for several moments; then, looking at me laconically, he said:

"I was thinking that some day, perhaps, the children of this earth will find the secret of their troubles

and as easily dispose of them, who knows?"

"Why, yes, who knows?" I said quietly. "I believe, however, we are making progress right along, are we not?" I asked.

"Are we making progress?" he echoed. "Perhaps we are in a way." He hesitated again for a moment and then—"Yes, I believe we have made some progress since the dark ages, but it seems to me, at times, as if we were making progress in a circle. We have not advanced very far except, perhaps, in intelligence and the intelligent application of our resources. We still have racial, religious and class hatreds, aye, and even persecutions. Our social evils are still rampant and popular unrest is as great, if not greater, than ever. We still are a world of beings growling at each other in diplomatic language or cutting each other's throats, blowing each other up or filling the ocean with the corpses of our children. I'll grant, however, that we have progressed some in the mode of doing those things. We are more refined about it—in some instances."

I was slightly annoyed at the turn Starmanow had given to the conversation and endeavored to lead him into pleasanter channels. I surmised that the awakening of the Princess had some connection with the face of his lost lady. I, therefore, asked him if the awakening of the Princess, in the third act, was any pleasanter.

"Why, yes," he said, brightening up, "that certainly gave me food for pleasanter thought. You knew that I was, or at least you believed that I was heart-whole. If that is so, you was undoubtedly right. As a matter of fact, I had never yet met a

woman who so attracted me—that I wanted to marry. There have been times, of course, when I believed it was all up with me, and that my heart was lost, only soon to be disillusioned and to find that it was but a passing fancy. Temperamentally I wanted to marry, but I first wanted love. I was seeking a soul that could commune with mine, eyes through whose depths I could sound her heart as a reflex to mine. I was seeking a wireless electric current that would carry uninterruptedly messages of love and devotion. I wanted the first blush for my sake; the first maiden kiss for my lips. I had met many admirable young ladies—some pretty—some beautiful—many very attractive and entertaining—none, however, who awakened to me, or whose current of thought, look or words were not distracted by others. They all seemed to be so world wise and so susceptible to counter currents that I had long ago given up all hope that there was one in whom I could awaken the love that I sought. The awakening of the Princess in the 'Forêt Bleu' filled my heart again with the desire of love. I yearned for the opportunity pictured on that stage, the chance to open the eyes of some lovable, innocent maiden, who would awaken for me and for my sake alone, whom I could take in my arms whole-souled and unspoiled, faithful and constant.

"I left the Opera House in a most peculiar mood. The opera itself, musically, was to me, at least, a disappointment. The Children who did up the Ogre left a pleasant recollection. When I thought of the Princess, however, I involuntarily sighed. I fear I was getting love-sick and a bit lonesome. I

had an early dinner and retired soon thereafter. I shall never forget the happenings of that night as long as I live."

"You astonish me," I remarked.

"Well, you shall hear and judge for yourself," he replied.

CHAPTER IV

DREAMLAND

Utopia is a distant Realm
Of which prophetic souls may dream.

I AGAIN pushed the cigar box towards Starmanow.

"Have a cigar," I said, "it will help to steady your nerves. I am afraid you are a little wrought up over your experience. There is nothing like a good cigar, if one smokes, to steady the nerves and soothe the mind."

He put a hand into the cigar box and toyed reflectively with two or three of the cigars, as though to select one. Then, suddenly removing his hand from the box and closing the cover with a bang, as if to overcome the temptation of sampling one, he sat back in his chair, and, crossing his legs, he asked with a half bashful smile whether I believed in dreams.

"Why, I don't know," I replied. "I am usually a pretty sound sleeper and have not given the matter of dreams much thought. Why do you ask?"

"Well," he mused, "I wanted to learn your opinion on the subject, if you have one. I must confess I do believe in dreams some; perhaps quite a little. You know, of course, that my race has been noted

for its gifts of divine communion, prophecy and the interpretation of dreams."

"Yes," I replied. "I know the Bible teems with it. We don't hear much of it nowadays, however; perhaps the human race has lost the knack of using it as a science."

"Well, perhaps," he again reflected, "I believe my people still retain, in a large measure, the mystic sensibilities of their fathers which are the main channels of dormant telepathy. They still interpret dreams, and pray that if the dreams portend good, that they may come true, and if they forebode evil, that they shall come to naught. I believe," he went on to say, "that I am, to some degree, susceptible to these mystic sensibilities, and that their activities have given me premonitions of future happenings as well as informed me of current events.

"On the evening of the afternoon that I had witnessed 'The Blue Forest' I had no sooner retired and closed my eyes, when I found myself on board a large, magnificent ocean steamer. We were sailing on a calm sea; not a billow nor a ripple ruffled the placid waters. It was a beautiful starlight night —the sky was cloudless. There seemed to be a great many people promenading forward and aft on the upper deck, but I do not remember seeing a single face that I knew. Strains of music reached me from the lower deck. I thought I recognized some aria of 'La Forêt Bleu' and I wondered how they happened to have it aboard. Then a lad, clad in the ordinary uniform of a sailor, appeared on the pilot bridge and began to sing an old melody that I knew when a child, but had never heard since.

"Suddenly I heard someone saying, 'Just look yonder—isn't that a cloud? Do you see it?'

"I turned around and saw a small dark speck on the far horizon in our wake. I thought it of small consequence and turned to listen to the sailor lad again, but he was gone, and in his place stood an officer with a long telescope to his eyes, watching the object in the far distance. I turned again to look in the same direction—what had been a mere speck had now grown to immense proportions and seemed to be still growing larger and larger. The other passengers on deck had also stopped in their promenade and stood watching the cloud as it grew. I felt puffs of wind becoming stronger in force; the sea began to heave and the ship to roll. I heard the officer on the pilot bridge issuing sharp commands in a hoarse, rumbling voice to the several sailors standing near him below the bridge, and they scampered away. As they ran along the deck the wind seemed to be increasing in violence and fury. I looked up to the sky again and found that the cloud had now covered the entire heavens.

"Lightning flashed and thunder rumbled with great intensity. At first the passengers stood motionless, as if spellbound, then they began to scatter and run hither and thither. I did not seem to mind it, but stood watching the entire scene in silent wonderment. The sky was now covered by an impenetrable, inky blackness which intensified the terrible lightning flashes that played a continual devil's tatoo in all directions. The roaring waves rose mountain high and threatened to engulf us at any moment.

"I heard the officer on the pilot's bridge hoarsely

shouting through a large megaphone to put on life preservers, and great excitement and confusion arose among the passengers. The prayers, wails and screams around me made my hair stand on ends. By this time the wind, which had grown to a tornado in velocity and force, actually lifted the huge ship off its watery bed and rushed it at terrific speed, I knew not whither.

"The thought came to me that I had better put on a life preserver, so I groped my way to the bridge, unfastened a life preserver which was hanging there and fastened it to my body. The terrific rollings of the vessel almost threw me overboard, but I grasped hold of the guard railing and held on for dear life. All this time the speed of the ship kept increasing; we seemed to be flying over mountainous billows rather than sailing.

" 'Hold on for dear life,' shouted the officer on the bridge through his megaphone, 'the ship is going to strike.'

"Immediately following the cry of warning the boat struck with such terrific force, although I held on to the ship's rail with all my might, the shock threw me bodily headlong into the sea. I then lost all consciousness.

"When I came to I was lying on a bed in a sleeping apartment. All around me was pure white—the walls, the ceiling, the furniture, the bedding, everything. The atmosphere, however, seemed to be pervaded with a faint red glow. I could not make out what it was, nor how I came to be there. My body felt numb, I could not move. Gradually, I became aware that someone was near me; that someone was

bending over me. Slowly an apparition became visible—the head and face of a girl, the most beautiful I had ever seen.

"Her head was crowned with a glorious mass of hair, of a dark, burnished copper color. The red atmospheric glow and the white background of the surroundings gave her features a glorious radiance. The velvet-like skin of her face looked creamy white, with just a tinge of light rose. Her features, neck and bust seemed to be perfect in their symmetry. Her lips, which were ruby, wore a smile that was bewitching to distraction. Her eyes, oh those wonderful, dark blue eyes, shaded with their long dark lashes, within which lurked that smile of friendship and sympathy to match that of her lips. The rays of her eyes entered into the very depths of my heart and drew me body and soul towards her.

"I yearned to bring that face nearer to me, to touch those lips with mine. By a superhuman effort I raised my arms to clasp them about her neck. As I did so the beautiful vision, with the smile still on its face, gradually faded from my sight. With a sigh my arms fell listless to my side.

"After the disappearance of the lady of the apparition I felt almost broken-hearted with disappointment. Shortly thereafter I turned my head to my left and found myself gazing at an old gentleman standing at my bedside.

" 'Ah,' he said, looking at me with kindly eyes, 'I see you are better.'

"I gazed up at him inquiringly. He was a man of medium size, perhaps five feet six inches in height, and of a fairly heavy build. His hair was

grey and he had a long, snowy-white beard. His eyes were of the same dark blue tint and kindly gaze as that of the young lady of my apparition.

" 'Was there any one here besides yourself?' I asked.

" 'Why, yes,' he replied, looking into my eyes, 'my daughter Hilda was here. She left the room but a moment ago. I guess you are all right now, you had better dress and go out doors, the air will do you good.'

" 'Where am I?' I questioned.

" 'You are in the Model City,' he replied.

" 'The Model City,' I echoed. 'Where is the Model City, pray? How came I here?'

" 'The Model City is located on one of the Man-is-Man Islands in the Sea of Eternity. You must have been ship-wrecked, for you floated ashore with some wreckage.'

"I tried to recall the incident of the ship-wreck, and where I was bound for at the time, but everything seemed confused and indistinct.

" 'Who are you, sir?' I questioned, jumping out of bed.

" 'I am Dr. Adam Zukunft, Managing Director of the Society of Utopian Science.'

"Suddenly he disappeared and I found myself standing in the midst of a most beautiful and extensive garden. The place seemed to be filled with magnificent trees of the tropical as well as the Northern climes. Here was the apple tree alongside of the mango, the orange alongside of the pear, the walnut alongside of the cocoanut, with banana, palm and cocoa trees in abundance. Everywhere the red glow

pervaded everything with an atmosphere of delicate warmth and life. Flower beds containing the most beautiful and varied assortment of flowers I had ever seen marked my pathway. I wandered about feeling uneasy and mystified, not knowing whither to go or what to do.

"At a turn of the pathway I came upon a sight that stopped and held me spellbound. There in a gorgeous and elaborate hammock suspended between orange trees was the lady of my apparition, evidently sound asleep. For a time I stood watching her; the beating of my heart thumped so loud that I feared it would awaken her. By degrees I gathered courage and approached her. As she lay there relaxed in slumber, enveloped in the warm, red glow, the loveliness of her face and form was more apparent than ever. I gazed upon the beautiful sleeper and longed to embrace her, to touch her eyes and lips. Suddenly, without warning, as I stood there enraptured, her eyes opened and they gazed into mine searchingly. As I returned her gaze I read in those beautiful dark blue orbs of hers, sympathy, love, devotion.

" 'Hilda, Hilda, my love,' I cried, stretching forth my arms to enfold and clasp her to my heart, when I felt a touch on my shoulder. I turned wrathfully upon the intruder and found myself face to face with Dr. Zukunft. In my perplexity and disappointment I turned inquiringly to Hilda only to find the hammock empty and Hilda gone.

" 'I am pleased to see that you find my garden interesting,' said Dr. Zukunft. 'I thought you would.'

" 'Yes, sir, I find your garden delightfully pleas-

ant, indeed. You seem to have here an international reunion of forestry and agriculture with the North and South evenly represented,' I responded nonchalantly.

" 'Yes,' assented Dr. Zukunft, with a nod of his head, 'it is an admirable arrangement, but only an experiment for the present. In time it may perhaps be so everywhere.'

"All at once I found myself riding in an automobile with the Doctor sitting alongside of me. The streets and sidewalks seemed exceptionally wide. We were apparently passing through the residential section of the city.

"The dwelling houses were of two and one-half stories, with a garden plot about twenty feet wide, intervening between the buildings. The people on the sidewalks—men, women and children—seemed to be sauntering along very leisurely; no one hurried. Every face wore an expression of peace and contentment.

"We had made several turns, and were apparently nearing the business section of the city. Shops, displaying merchandise of every description, now appeared on either side of us. Shade trees still lined the sidewalks and the red glow, intensified by the sun, gave the city the appearance of a Red Forest.

" 'Doctor,' said I, 'what causes the peculiar red glow phenomenon that I see everywhere about me?'

" 'The red glow you notice here,' he said, 'is but the reflection of the sun's rays in the good nature of our people. It was a long time coming, but it never leaves us now. It is with us day and night.'

"We rode on for a while in silence. Presently we

came to a large square in the center of which was a magnificent bronze statue. Approaching closer, I saw that it represented a group of men of every race known to mankind, standing obliquely in a circle at the center of an immense globe with their arms thrown over each other's shoulders. The globe rested upon a large marble pedestal on which were etched these simple words:

" '*Dedicated to The Perpetuation of The Brotherhood of Man.*'

"Suddenly the machine rushed up a steep incline. As we reached the summit of the hill the car stopped. It looked to me as though we were on the brink of a deep abyss. The hill seemed to end abruptly; its inward declivity sheering into a straight and mighty wall a hundred or more feet deep. The road looked as if it was winding its way along the brink.

"In the distant valley on a great plateau I could discern a little town composed of white cottages with red tile roofs; they looked very pretty in the distance. At the head of a stairway was a small white lodge or keeper's cottage. A man dressed in white stood in its doorway.

" 'What place is this?' I asked the doctor as I endeavored to make out the doings of what looked to me like pigmies in the distant fields below.

" 'That,' said the doctor, 'is the town of Salvationville.'

" 'The town of Salvationville?' I echoed.

" 'Yes,' said the doctor, 'it is inhabited by the peo-

ple of our Model City who have failed to live up to our laws.'

" 'I don't quite understand.'

" 'It is our town for the correction of the weak-minded.'

" 'Oh, insane asylum?'

" No, for the criminal-minded.'

" 'Ah, it is where your reformatory is located. I don't quite see the reformatory buildings from here.'

" 'You mean that you do not see the castles and the prison walls, the place where the dungeons are located. We have no such place. The little town with its cottages and fields are the reformatories, as you would call them.'

" 'I don't quite understand, sir. Please explain.'

" 'Our remedy is a system of elimination, instead of the old system of degradation. We set apart for the criminally diseased not a walled castle, with grated cells and dungeons, but a township with sanitary and clean cottages, farms, workshops, stores, schools and municipal buildings. The only difference between this and any other community is that this township is quarantined. Every person who is sentenced here enters it with the chance to start life anew, not when his sentence has expired, but with the beginning of it. He comes here to be cured, not to be degraded.'

"The doctor waved his hand and our car started forward on the winding path along the brink of the mountain side. The car stopped before a large, low-storied building which reminded me of an enclosed skating rink. It was ablaze with multi-colored lights.

" 'What's this?' I inquired.

" 'This is where the Bal Masque is held,' said the doctor. 'Let us go in.'

" 'I was about to protest, for I hastily remembered that I was not in proper dress, but lo and behold—when I glanced at myself I found that I was arrayed in a most glorious military uniform, trimmed with gold lace and bedecked with medals. I wondered how that came about, but I found no time to make comment, for the doctor took me by the arm as we alighted and marched me into the foyer of the building. From somewhere about him he produced two pink masks and handing one to me, he said:

" 'Put this on. We are not permitted to enter otherwise.'

"I adjusted the mask to my face and the doctor did likewise. We then entered the main hall.

"The sight that met my gaze as we entered was gorgeous and dazzling. Thousands of persons garbed in the various multi-colored costumes of many nations, ancient as well as modern, danced to music that recalled to my mind the score of 'La Forêt Bleu.' The dazzling effect of the dancers' raiment was accentuated by a great profusion of colored lights on immense pendant-chandeliers and spider-web electric wiring. Every one present wore a pink mask.

"The doctor and I stood by watching the dancers for a while.

" 'Do you know in what costume Miss Zukunft appears this evening?' I inquired of the doctor. 'Will you be able to recognize her if she comes this way?'

"'I am not certain,' replied the doctor, pleasantly. 'She ought to appear as the sunflower, but no one can tell the changes that young ladies will make at the last moment. I may recognize her, though, if she comes this way.'

"I stood watching the dancers as they whirled by. What a gay gathering of phantoms they were. Emperor dancing with shepherdess; Cossack with Parisian belle; king with dainty Quakeress; modern French dandy with rollicking German barmaid; stately knight with simpering princess; jingling fool with Spanish dancing girl; all happy, laughing, chatting, giggling, whirling by in a hazy, mazy fashion, becoming more indistinct every instant. I looked in that maze of dancers for one pair of dark blue eyes, for one feminine figure that I longed to see, but alas, they were not to be seen. I looked around to where Dr. Zukunft stood, to see if he were assisting in the search. To my surprise he was gone. The music seemed to cease and the dancers to melt away in the distance. Gradually I felt that I was being left all alone; the lights grew dimmer. Suddenly I noticed a figure advancing towards me. A beautiful, girlish being, somewhat dignified, but of most lovely bearing—not very tall, but of perfect poise. I could not see her face, for she still wore her pink mask. Upon her head she wore a natty, little dark brown toque, trimmed with gold, from beneath which rebellious tendrils of dark bronze hair fought for liberty. Her costume, which was also of some dark brown material, trimmed with gold, was of Grecian style, so that as she walked two trim little ankles clothed in golden silk played

peek-a-boo with the pink slippers on her feet. A sweet, brilliant, dazzling vision of feminine beauty, never to be forgotten.

" 'Hilda,' I cried, 'Hilda, my love, I have been waiting for you for a long, long while. Will you come to me, dear?'

"Her beautiful ruby lips curved into a sweet smile, though no words escaped them, as she gracefully walked into my outstretched arms. I enfolded her in strong embrace, her sweet body yielding to my touch. I could feel the flutter of her heart as she lay there, nestling in my arms. I threw my gaze on those sweet lips, still wearing its sweet smile, and was about to impress upon them the seal of my love with a kiss when she withdrew with a start and gazed on some object in back of me. I turned to look at what startled her so, and found myself gazing into the ferocious eyes of a Spanish Matador, who stood there, not more than ten feet away, in the full regalia of his calling.

" 'Who is this?' I cried, turning inquiringly to Hilda, when to my great amazement I found that Hilda had disappeared.

"The Matador stamped his right foot with rage.

" 'Defend yourself,' he shouted, and rushed at me.

"I turned to meet the onslaught and grappled with my antagonist. We swayed backwards and forwards in the attempt to throw each other, but we seemed to be so well matched in strength that neither of us appeared to be gaining any advantage. Little by little, however, I felt as if my strength was waning, then by a superhuman effort I got a firm hold of my antagonist around the waist and threw him

bodily to the ground. As I did so I opened my eyes.

"The early morning sun was peeking in at the window. I looked at the clock on my dresser. It pointed to six. I tried to recall what day it was, and remembered it was Sunday. I smiled and closed my eyes to take another nap. It seemed as though I had only just closed my eyes again for I was conscious that I was not asleep, when I saw my dear mother, these many years dead and gone, standing alongside of my bed with a smile upon her dear and beloved face.

" 'Hirsch, dear,' she said, 'Hirsch.'

"I knew I was not asleep and wanted to wake up, to open my eyes. I was frightened, for I could not open them. I struggled to wake up, swaying from side to side; the vision of my mother became indistinct, then by tremendous effort I opened my eyes again. The clock showed it was six fifteen, but I did not try to sleep again.

"I jumped out of bed and dressed. I knew then that my dream was a prophecy. I felt certain that I had been warned of some impending happening that would be of great consequence to me; but whether it was to be for good or evil I could not tell. The whole dream stood out before my mind's eye, as if it had actually occurred, and through it all, the vision of Hilda, with her brilliant dark eyes and sweet smile. Every time that vision of hers appeared it brought a smile to my lips and love to my heart.

"Fred, old man," Starmanow concluded, "I am in love with the vision of my dream. I am in love with Hilda. I know she exists; she lives for me,

somewhere, and I must find her."

"Well, my boy," I consoled, "I hope that you do find her. If it were not, however, for the fact that you said you dined lightly that evening I should say that you ate something that disagreed with you and suffered thereby an exceedingly bad attack of the nightmare."

Starmanow shook his head.

"No " he said, "not when they come that way. I have had them both before. I can tell one from the other. This one was a prophecy. I had mother's warning. She would not appear for nothing, but I cannot say just what it all means."

"Well," I said, looking at the clock, "it is almost one, so we had better retire, and to-morrow we will see how you feel about it."

Starmanow assented and we retired for the night.

In the morning the sun was shining brightly; not a sign of nature's escapade of the night before, except, perhaps, the moisture on the ground and sprouting blossoms on trees and garden. I was up early, but I found Starmanow had arisen before me. He greeted me with a smile when I entered the den.

"Good morning," I said. "I see you are up very early. I hope you had some rest."

"Good morning to you, Fred, and I thank you. I rested well and was up with the sun. What do you say if we have breakfast in town?" he inquired.

"All right," I replied.

Suiting action to word, we started for town and breakfasted in a comfortable little restaurant on Brattle street. After breakfast I shook hands with Starmanow and bade him goodbye.

"Now, my boy," I said in parting, "try to get that dream out of your mind, or it will get on your nerves and make trouble for you."

"Thank you, Fred," he said, "but I am going to find that girl even if I have to ransack every part of the globe for her."

"Well," said I, "good luck, but don't overdo it," and so we parted, I fully believing that his apparent infatuation with the vision would soon pass away.

Indeed, I laughed to myself at the foolishness of the fellow. "Just think of going to ransack the world for a girl you dream about; a mere phantom, not knowing even if she exists," and I laughed again. A young lady in passing stared at me, uncertain, no doubt, as to my sanity. "Well, I wish him luck," I murmured. "He certainly has a long journey before him if he insists on carrying out his foolish notion, poor old boy."

I little dreamed how prophetic this last soliloquy of mine was to prove, or how near the truth both of us were.

CHAPTER V

The Engagement Party

CYRUS:

On bended knee for thy love I pray.
Darling, say yes, and name the day.

MELINDA:

Alack, alas, mayhap and maybe
If thou wilt come to my side 'stead o' thy knee.

SUNDAY evening at precisely seven o'clock we arrived at the Morgelefskys' residence. We found quite a number of guests present. The host and hostess received us in person and assured us of their delight at our coming. We were then presented to Minnie and her fiancé, Mr. Harry Youngerman. Ethel knew Minnie, of course, but the young man we just met for the first time. He was apparently about thirty years of age, bald-headed for a man so young, but with a nose and chin that showed determination. "A likely young man," I mused, sizing him up. Later I learned that he was engaged in the wholesale haberdashery business in New York. I had no doubt he would make good.

The Morgelefskys occupied an eleven-room house, which under ordinary circumstances was undoubtedly large enough for their needs. But this

evening, with the main rooms on the first floor almost exclusively used for reception and banqueting purposes, the many guests found themselves in somewhat close and warm quarters on the second floor. Everybody, however, was good-natured, and innocent flirtations, pleasant repartee and sedate anecdotes were met with and heard on every side; a very interesting assembly it was, indeed.

There was Rabbi Sarasohn, with full flowing beard and kindly smile; the sexton, Mr. Magid, who looked more churchie and busier than any other person present. Then there was Mr. Wolperson, the cantor, with his small but stately carriage, prince imperial and the absorbed air of a singer, forever mentally rehearsing the melodies of his repertoire. The Hon. Gerald McCarthy, Congressman from the district; the Hon. Wilton Marker, State Senator, and Messrs. Lynch and Poor, State Representatives, formed a little group of their own loudly discussing President Wilson's assumption of Democratic party leadership. Then there was the president of the local orthodox congregation, Mr. Rapparport, who importuned every person he addressed for immediate subscriptions to certain charities he named. There was also Martin DiSilvera, banker. He hailed from one of the West India Islands and admitted to be of Jewish descent. He played quite a figure on the Curb Exchange and was reputed to be very wealthy. And notwithstanding his somewhat unattractive figure—for he was bald, stout and short—he was still considered by many as a desirable catch. There was also present a large number of other members of the congregation; several of Mr. Young-

erman's New York friends; a number of doting mamas and a bevy of young people who made the rafters ring with their merriment.

As Mrs. Courtney and I stood there, enjoying the scene and occasionally being presented to some of those present, I became attracted by an unusual vision of feminine beauty and maidenly loveliness mingling with the other guests. As she moved about she displayed an exquisite figure, and a white round neck that was captivating. Her massive dark copper-colored hair with its stray tendrils continually attempting to escape, kept her delicate fingers busy with an everlasting attempt to bring them back to the fold. Suddenly she turned her head in our direction. I was surprised at the brilliancy of her dark eyes, which focused their rays upon us for a moment like two brilliant searchlights; she espied Ethel. Immediately she approached us; a wildly fascinating smile bewitchingly playing upon her face and lips. I knew that I had seen her before. I endeavored to recall the instance of our meeting, but without success. I finally decided that it must have been during my visits to Ethel's home, before our marriage.

"Oh, I am so delighted to see you here," I heard her say to Ethel, in a sweet, musical, happy voice, as they embraced, her face radiant with another smile full of rapture. "I am so glad you came," she added, gleefully shooting two streams of light my way for a moment.

"Fred," said Ethel, "meet Miss Ruth Morgelefsky. I am not sure if you have met before. Miss Morgelefsky, my husband, Mr. Courtney."

"I am delighted," I assured her as the slim, deli-

cate fingers of her right hand lay within my grasp. "I was wondering a few moments ago if we had met before."

"Oh, I think you've seen me some years ago, when I was much younger," she trilled with just a trace of laughter in her voice; "I do not think we have met formally, Mr. Courtney, although Mrs. Courtney and I have known each other for quite a long time," and she threw a pleasant glance at Ethel, "but perhaps you know my brother. He and I resemble each other a great deal," with a mischievous upward glance, "we are twins, you know," and her merry laughter at the thought of it was delightfully pleasant.

"Ah!" I exclaimed, "then that accounts for it." Yet even as my lips spoke the words something within me seemed to doubt the assumption, while my mind kept groping for a more tangible solution.

"Oh, there is Jimmy," Miss Morgelefsky exclaimed, as her eyes rested on a tall, bronze-haired athletic chap in mysterious confab with a little young lady standing close to him, eyes upturned to him in complete oblivion of their surroundings.

Miss Morgelefsky laughed joyfully. "Miss Miller is trying to hypnotize him," she gurgled. "I must break the spell, if I can," and off she rushed with an indefinable dignity in her movement, yet full of girlish grace. She seized her brother by the arm with a happy and pleasant laugh at the astonished Miss Miller and marched him right up to us. He was grinning good naturedly.

"Mr. and Mrs. Courtney, my brother, James Morgan," she said:— "Jim, Mr. and Mrs. Court-

ney. I believe you have met before." She must have read our puzzled expression as we were shaking hands with the young man, for she added laughingly, "Jim, you know, has changed his name to Morgan; he thinks it's a good beginning for the career of a future millionaire."

"The young people nowadays, Mr. Courtney," said Mr. Magid, who had just drawn near with Rabbi Sarasohn and overheard Ruth's comment, "the young people, sir, are getting ashamed of their race, their religion, and their fathers' names," and he wagged his head mournfully.

"Oh, I beg your pardon, sir," exclaimed young Morgan, reddening, "that is not quite so. I am not ashamed at all, only . . ."

"You need not apologize, young man," interrupted Rabbi Sarasohn, interceding. "Morgelefsky is no more a Jewish name than Morgan is. As a matter of fact, the Jewish people have since the dispersion invariably adopted the names of the countries within which they dwell. That condition is to be found almost everywhere. I see, therefore, no reasonable objection to the adoption by American Jews of names more in keeping with their adopted country, rather than to retain some outlandish names that are only a drawback to them in the transaction of their daily affairs."

"But, Rabbi, they change everything; they forget everything," wailed Mr. Magid, emphasizing his words with many gestures. "They become regular 'goyim,' strangers and unbelievers."

"It is certainly deplorable that a great many of our young people do not take a more active interest

in the synagogue and other communal affairs, but this is not an opportune time to discuss such matters," replied the Rabbi with a wave of his hand, dismissing the subject. "We are here to offer our congratulations, not to lecture." He smiled benignly and patted Jim Morgan on the shoulder as he moved away. Mr. Magid, who followed the Rabbi, showed unmistakable signs of the fact that he was still unconsolable at the fate of Judaism.

"There goes a good and sensible man," I remarked, indicating Rabbi Sarasohn with a nod. "Religion is a mighty delicate subject to discuss these days in any denomination."

"You are not going to turn preacher, too," ventured Ruth with a mischievous smile in her eyes, "are you, Mr. Courtney?"

"No, not unless I start on a course of lectures for young men on how to beware of dark blue eyes," I replied.

"Fred," remonstrated Ethel with pretended severity, "well, I never," while another peal of Ruth's merry laughter was so contagious that we all joined.

"Is Mr. Courtney always such a great jollier?" she questioned Ethel as we all moved towards the stairway to descend, dinner having been announced.

"Fred is a great tease, Ruth. Don't mind him in the least or he will turn your head."

"Oh, I almost turned my ankle," giggled little Miss Miller, who had followed Jim Morgan and joined us. "I didn't see that step. Can't you help a lady down the stairs, Jim Morgan?" she complained.

"I would gladly carry you down in my arms, Jean,

if you would only let me," offered young Morgan, and everybody near by tittered.

As Ethel and I were about to descend I espied Mr. Magid approaching, evidently to follow us downstairs. The thought came to me that he would be a good man to question regarding the Prensky family, whose whereabouts I had been steadily endeavoring to locate.

"Mr. Magid," I said as he drew near, "as sexton of your synagogue you are likely to know many of your people?"

"Why, my dear sir—my dear Mr. Courtney," he replied, looking at me with pained surprise in his eyes, "do I know many of my people? Why, my dear sir, hundreds of 'em—five, six hundred members of our synagogue alone I know. My dear sir, I collect from fourteen to fifteen thousand dollars a year—fourteen to fifteen thousand—from members only. And how do you suppose I get it? I go to them. Why, my dear sir, my dear Mr. Courtney, of course I know them," and he smiled so benignantly that Ethel and I joined.

"Very good," I said, "then perhaps you can tell me the whereabouts of a family named Prensky."

"Prensky, Prensky," he repeated, evidently cudgeling his brains, "where they come from?"

"From a small town in Russia called Drashnishok."

"Drashnishok, Drashnishok, no, my dear Mr. Courtney, I don't know such a family. I know a family by the name of Prenofsky," he went on, "they're from Kovne, and Prenitsky that is from Pren in Suvalk and Pishchansky that is from Vilna.

But Prensky from Drashnishok I do not know, my dear Mr. Courtney."

"That's too bad," I replied, "I am very anxious to find where they are, and I thought you might know. If you happen to come across them in any way I shall be greatly obliged if you will let me know."

"Why, my dear sir, sure I will let you know," he assured me as we were descending the stairs. "Sure I'll let you know."

The parlor and dining-room on the first floor adjoined each other with wide sliding doors between. These were now thrown apart and the rooms converted into one large banqueting hall; tables were set so as to reach from one end of the room to the other. Two smaller tables also occupied space in the large reception hall on the same floor. All the tables were neatly set and a tasteful display of flowers, artistically arranged, gave it a pleasant and festive appearance. Guests, to the number of nearly one hundred, sat at the tables.

Mr. Morgelefsky, as the host, occupied the seat at the head of the table in the main banquet hall with Mrs. Morgelefsky to his right and Rabbi Sarasohn to his left. The fiancé occupied a seat next to the Rabbi and the financée to the left of her mother; otherwise no special places were assigned and guests sat down with whom and wherever they pleased, there being room for all. A small orchestra rendered musical selections during the courses. A hubbub of conversation assisted the orchestra in keeping things lively, nor did the happy pair escape the teasings of the younger set or the repartee of the

older.

After the last course had been disposed of and the tables cleared, Mr. Morgelefsky in a few well chosen words formally announced the engagement of his beloved daughter, Minnie, to Mr. Harry Youngerman, "an estimable young man whom," he said, "they already loved as one of the family." He also announced that the wedding would take place on the fifteenth day of June of the current year, and that he hoped all the guests of the evening would be present.

Rabbi Sarasohn offered his congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Morgelefsky as well as to the young people, and gave them his blessing.

Short remarks were then made by several other guests, including Congressman McCarthy and Senator Marker, but nothing further of any particular interest happened until Ethel and I were about to leave for home.

Ethel had joined many of the ladies on the way upstairs to get their wraps. I remained standing on the lower floor, smoking. Presently I heard DiSilvera's low voice behind me saying in an undertone, "Well, Ruth, shall it be ours next, eh?"

I heard Miss Morgelefsky's low musical laugh in reply. "I am afraid that will never be, Mr. DiSilvera."

"Ruth, Ruth," pleaded DiSilvera, "you know how I love you—you make me desperate."

"Excuse me," begged Ruth, "but really I can't stop another moment. The guests are leaving and I must help mother and Minnie to see them off."

"Just wait a minute, Ruth; wait a minute," urged

DiSilvera; "you know your father is in business trouble and will need money soon—much money to save his property. I can help him if you will promise."

"Father in business trouble?" questioned Ruth, as if she hadn't heard aright. "I know he hasn't been quite himself for some time, but I did not know what it was. What is the trouble? Tell me."

"Oh, I guess your father will tell you himself if you ask him, but then it won't matter if you'll promise. Will you, Ruth?"

"I must go and see father," she replied as she moved swiftly away.

I involuntarily turned about just in time to see DiSilvera pass out of the front door.

As we were making our adieux Mr. Morgelefsky led me aside and said, "Mr. Courtney, I have a matter of great importance upon which I desire to consult you about professionally. When may I see you at your office?"

"Well, let me see," I said, mentally recalling my next day's engagements. "If you can come, say around ten o'clock in the morning, I will give you what time you may need."

"All right," he replied, "I will be there with Jim."

When I joined Ethel again Ruth, who was with her, raised her large round eyes, like those of a questioning child, to mine, her lips were curved into a slight smile, but there was a perceptible shade of worry in her countenance.

"Mr. Courtney," she whispered, busying herself in assisting Ethel, "is it anything serious with father?" and she searched my eyes as if she would read

her answer there.

"Why, no," I replied, laughing; "your father spoke of nothing serious. There is really nothing to tell," I added, as I noted that she did not feel entirely assured, "at least not at present, anyway. He simply said he would be in to see me soon."

"I hope you are right, and that it is nothing of importance," she said. She was apparently much disturbed. But, as I was no whit wiser than she, I was in no position to enlighten her further.

It was almost midnight when Ethel and I left for home, having enjoyed a very pleasant evening. I little suspected, however, that this visit was to be so fruitful in supplying the missing links for the solution of Hirsch Starmanow's most extraordinary dream, and John Brown's quest.

CHAPTER VI

A Flyer in Stocks

Man has paid with world's grim misery
More than full worth,
For all the gold and precious gems
Taken from the earth.

I ARRIVED at my office the next morning at the usual hour—8.50—and was soon deeply occupied with current matters. Many clients called. I was in my private office in consultation with one of them when I was informed by Miss Muirhead that Mr. Morgelefsky and another gentleman were waiting to see me. I glanced at my watch, it was just ten o'clock. I disposed of the matter on hand as quickly as possible, and then Mr. Morgelefsky and Jim were shown in.

After they were both seated and the usual greetings were over, Mr. Morgelefsky took from his pocket an oblong envelope, from which he extracted some folded official-looking documents. These he handed to me, saying, "I think you had better look at these papers, Mr. Courtney, before I tell you my story."

I took the papers from him and found upon unfolding them that they were two stock certificates of the "Chimborazo Gold and Metals Mining Com-

pany of Ecuador of one thousand shares each, par value five dollars."

"Yes," I observed, looking up and indicating with a nod for Mr. Morgelefsky to proceed with his story.

"Several years ago," he began, "I received an official looking package by mail which, upon opening, I found to contain a letter from the New York office of this company, with an enclosure of prospectus and maps of what they termed 'the most extraordinary find of the new century.' I am sorry that I foolishly destroyed these papers so that I cannot show them to you. However, I had read them so often before their destruction that I know by heart almost every word they contained. I remember that they stated, among other things, that the mine was an accidental find by one John Brown."

"Wait a moment," I commanded, "John Brown, did you say?"

"Yes."

"Can you describe the man to me?"

"No, I have never seen him. Why?"

"Oh, well, it doesn't matter—if you have never seen him. I thought perhaps I could recognize him from your description, if he was any one I knew. However, go on with the story," I urged.

"The circular went on further to state," resumed Morgelefsky, "that this man Brown, while employed on the railroad works that were being built to connect Guayaquil, the principal Ecuadorian port on the Pacific Coast, with Quito, its capital city, had stumbled, as it were, on the find. That in building this road it was necessary to go by way of the Prov-

PROPERTY
OF THE
NEW YORK

ince of Chimborazo, where the mountain of that name was located. That by reason of his former experience as a miner, Brown was attracted by the color and quality of the rock near the mountain side and became convinced after a time that there was undoubtedly rich mineral possibilities in the locality. Taking a substantial quantity of these deposits for the purpose of having it assayed, he packed it away with his belongings and took the first opportunity that presented itself to return to the States. As soon as Brown reached New York he had a careful assay made of the samples and was overjoyed to find that his perceptions were correct and that he had found what was likely to become one of the richest gold and copper mines in the world.

"Mr. Brown had no funds with which to purchase the necessary concessions or to begin operations, and was therefore obliged to confide in some men with whom he sought acquaintance and who he believed would be able to finance the undertaking. Another trip was made to Ecuador, more samples obtained and tests made, which were entirely satisfactory. But when he and his confidents met to organize and outline a plan of operation, it was found that contrary to expectations they were unable to supply all the necessary funds. It was finally decided to incorporate, and to offer for public subscription a large part of the capital stock. This was done. The capital stock was set at one million dollars divided into two hundred thousand shares of the par value of five dollars each. The underwriters retained sixty per cent., twenty per cent. going to Mr. Brown and forty per cent. they said, was paid

for in cash, the proceeds of which were used in paying for concessions, preliminary work, and expenses of prospecting. The remaining forty per cent. was to be offered to the public at par in order to obtain the necessary capital for the erection of buildings and the purchase of machinery, etc.

"They gave it as their opinion that if the assays of the samples were any criterion of the ore deposits contained in the mine, as they hoped, then, each five dollar share would be worth five hundred dollars or more within a year.

"I had often received letters of this nature, but had never been tempted by mining schemes. This time, however, I dashed for the hook and bit hard. Without the knowledge of my family I scraped together ten thousand dollars in cash and paid for the two thousand shares of stock you now hold in your hands.

"Every year, thereafter, I have received a notice for the annual meeting which was held in New York with a proxy for me to execute, appointing one of the officers of the company to act and vote for me. This, I at first did; before I doubted their honesty. I also received annual reports of the progress of the developments of the mine and the condition of the company's treasury. The first annual report was glowing. Buildings were being erected, machinery was being shipped, and the treasury showed a large balance. The second annual report spoke of the buildings being completed and machinery being installed; the treasury showed a much smaller balance with no immediate prospect of income. The third annual report was pessimistic. The fourth annual

report stated that work at the mine had to be discontinued in order to stop further loss, and the treasurer's balance sheet showed a large deficit.

"Now to cap the climax," concluded Mr. Morgelefsky, "I received this," and he handed me a letter which upon reading I found to be a notice of the Chimborazo Gold and Metals Mining Company to the stockholders, informing them that at the last annual meeting of the company, it was voted to levy a two dollar assessment upon all of the company's outstanding shares; one-half to be paid within three months, and the other half within six months from the date of notice. It also stated that the assessment was made for the purpose of providing the necessary funds to liquidate the company's outstanding indebtedness, as well as for further development work at the company's mine.

"By Jove," I ejaculated, "this is certainly going some."

Morgelefsky looked heartbroken.

"Come, Dad," said Jim, "this isn't the way to do things. We're here to see if we can make a decent fight for our rights. You can't fight with bowed head and closed eyes, brace up."

The old man raised his head and forced a smile.

"You are right, my son." Then addressing me, "Jim is the only member of my family who knows about this. I had to have a confident or go mad, and Jim, now, is old enough and sensible enough to understand and help."

"Yes," I concurred. "The boy is undoubtedly all right. What is it you want me to do for you?"

"I was afraid," said Morgelefsky, "I would find

it a hardship to raise the four thousand dollars necessary to pay these assessments, even if I would. Then, it is also a question whether I should make these payments, even if I could. Is it not like throwing good money after bad? What would be the use? I want your advice, Mr. Courtney, if you can give it to me."

For several minutes I sat there thoughtfully considering the matter.

First of all was this John Brown of the mine identical with that of my caller of the other day? And if so, would I be ethically justified in permitting Morgelefsky to retain me in this case? On second thought though, that seemed entirely improbable if not impossible. It seemed entirely too far fetched to connect the John Brown formerly of Siberia with that of John Brown the Ecuadorian Railroad Engineer as one and the same person. Furthermore the name was common, and on his own admission the name of the Siberian gentleman was unquestionably assumed. I, therefore, dismissed that contingency as unworthy of further consideration.

The next thing to be considered was the purpose of the Chimborazo Mine Management in levying the assessment. What was their scheme? What was their object? Was it really their purpose to raise funds for further work at the mine notwithstanding that it had been abandoned nearly two years ago? It did not seem reasonable that they should expect much of any returns on the assessment after the poor showing they had made. If they did not expect much of any returns why did they levy the assessment?

The non-payment of the assessment would of course mean forfeiture of the shares. Ah, that was their scheme probably.

"Well," I said aloud, "I rather think that this is an attempt to wipe out the minority stockholders. There must be a strong motive back of it and it's up to us to find out what it is. Have you any one out in Ecuador whom you could ask to take a look at the property for you, and see what is doing out there?"

"Why, good heavens, no," replied Morgelefsky. "Why can't I appeal to the United States Consul? They must have one there."

"No," I said, "that is," I corrected, "the United States may have a consul there, but I don't think he can serve us to any advantage. If your parties are up to any deviltry, they will fool him. We must have some one whom they will not suspect of making inquiries for the purpose of looking them up."

"I understand. But what good will all this do? How will it help me?" questioned Mr. Morgelefsky.

"Why, if they are up to any trickery, we will find out what it is and act accordingly. Now, if they don't expect you to pay this assessment and want you wiped out, it must be because they have something important to gain by so doing. Perhaps they have struck a great find, a rich vein, and they want to keep it for the benefit of the insiders only. Such things are known to have happened before. If you could get a man to go out there and investigate, and get them down to rights, you may at least be in a position to save your ten thousand dollars."

"But whom can I get? Whom can I trust?" wailed Morgelefsky.

"I'll go, Dad," came from Jim.

"You!"

"Yes, father. I have studied mining engineering. Here is the chance to test my training and ability, and, furthermore, whatever the outcome, you'll at least be sure you are not being fooled."

"But, good God, boy, what will your mother and sisters say? Ruth?"

"I'll simply tell them I have obtained a position. I don't have to say Ecuador. I'll say it's on the Isthmus; on the Canal. Almost every one that wants to is getting work in my line out there, now."

"The boy is right," I said; "let him go. It is your only salvation. Have you the last annual report?"

"No."

"That's bad. However, I'll send for it. If the reports of their income and expenditure since incorporation are not just right, I'll find it. In the meanwhile, I will bring injunction proceedings at once to hold up the collections of the assessment anyway."

"I do hope you are right, Mr. Courtney," said Mr. Morgelefsky, "and I am ready to do whatever you advise in the matter; only as for Jim, I am really afraid. You see, after all, he is still a boy and Ecuador is so far away. If anything should happen to him—"

"Why, father, what is the matter?" demanded Jim. "I am a graduate engineer. I need employment at my profession. If you will not employ me,

I must seek employment of others. In the event of obtaining it elsewhere, how do you know I may not be sent to a greater distance or graver danger?"

"I believe Mr. Morgan is quite right," I advised. "You need his services, Mr. Morgelefsky. He is the best man you can get for your purpose, and you ought to be glad to avail yourself of his assistance. The fact that Jim is your son should make no difference; if anything it's in his favor, because, whereas you are apt to be doubtful of others you know you can trust him, so I guess we had better consider that part of our plan concluded."

"You had better say yes, father," pleaded Jim. "It is the only way out that I can see."

Mr. Morgelefsky scrutinized his son's face for a few moments thoughtfully and with sorrowful eyes. Jim met his father's gaze with a countenance full of resolution and determination.

"All right, my boy," Mr. Morgelefsky said at last, as if he was satisfied with what he read in his son's face. "You may go," but he said it slowly, reluctantly, and in a voice that ended with a sigh.

"Very well," I said, "then that is all settled. When can you start, Jim?"

"By the first boat from New York."

"The sooner the better. Do you know when the next boat leaves?"

"No, but I believe one sails every Saturday. I will make inquiries as soon as I leave this office."

"All right, you will let me know, and see me again before you leave Boston."

"Yes."

Father and son rose to go.

"Mr. Courtney," Mr. Morgelefsky said as I stood up to bid them goodbye, "if you have to proceed to court, will it be in Boston or New York?"

"In New York. The company's principal offices are there."

"That's good. I have no doubt you will do all you can, Mr. Courtney, but please do not say anything to my family for the present. I am afraid it will alarm them unnecessarily."

"Do not fear, I will say nothing to them. Now, goodbye," I said, shaking hands with both of them. "I will see you sometime this week again, Jim?"

"Yes, sir, you will."

After the departure of Mr. Morgelefsky and his son other matters occupied my immediate attention, not the least of which was my attempt to locate the Prensky family, but I did not lose sight of the Morgelefsky case. The same day I forwarded a letter to the New York office of the "Chimborazo Gold and Metals Mining Company," informing them that I had been retained by Mr. Morgelefsky to look after his interests with the company; requesting copies of their several annual reports, and a more detailed outline of the purposes for which the funds to be raised by the assessment were to be used.

Nothing further happened until Thursday, when Jim Morgan called to inform me that he was leaving that evening by way of the Fall River line for New York. From there he was to sail on Saturday for Colon, thence by railroad across the Isthmus to Panama and from there by first steamer to Guayaquil. He was as jubilant with the anticipation of his prospective trip as a three-year-old child with a

new toy. His countenance was radiant and resolute, although the expression of his dark blue eyes was serious.

Again I bade him goodbye, wishing him success and a safe return.

"Take care of yourself, now, my boy," I said affectionately, with a strong grip of the right hand and my left on his shoulder, for his contemplated trip affected me strangely, at the last moment. "We want you back again safe and sound whether you succeed or not."

He smiled with a peculiar sweet curve to the lips that reminded me so much of his sister Ruth.

"It's all right, Mr. Courtney," said he with a boyish laugh. "Don't worry. It's up to me and I'll make good. Goodbye," and with another grip of the hand he was gone.

I sat down and thoughtfully drummed the top of my desk with my fingers for a few minutes.

"It is a strange trip," I mused, "and may give him some trouble. If there is a scheme afoot to rob his father, though, I believe he will get the proof of it. That will mean a great deal to him and his family. If he does not succeed, or if the management of the Chimborazo Company is straight he will at least have the experience of the adventure. He is young, it will do him good, and in any event will help broaden him."

On a morning in the latter part of April, about three weeks after Jim Morgan's departure, I re-received two letters both marked Panama. I was somewhat surprised to note that the handwriting of one differed from that of the other. I was

further surprised when I thought I recognized the writing on one of them as that of Hirsch Starmanow. I immediately opened the envelope and extracted several closely written sheets of paper, which, when I glanced at them, proved sure enough to be from my old friend. The other I found to be from Jim Morgan.

I read Jim's letter first; it was as follows:—

"PANAMA, April 20, 19—.

"MY DEAR MR. COURTNEY,

"I am pleased to inform you that on Friday last I landed safely in Colon. It was an uneventful passage, with the one exception of meeting on board the steamer a Mr. Hirsch Starmanow, who is also of Boston and on a vacation trip. Mr. Starmanow and I have become fast friends. That helped materially to overcome the unpleasantness of a first ocean voyage, for, although I endeavored to be very brave, I was nevertheless obliged—during the two first days out to cling to the ship's rail a great part of the time.

"Mr. Starmanow's kind assistance helped to dispel the effects of the Mal-de-mere, and made the rest of the trip a pleasant and interesting one.

"Mr. Starmanow informs me that he knows you well and he spoke of you with a great deal of esteem and affection. We also travelled together by rail from Colon to Panama where we both are now. I intend to take the next steamer for Guayaquil, but Mr. Starmanow is to remain here for some time.

"I urged him to join me on the trip to Ecuador, and although I did not take him into my confidence

as to the purpose of my contemplated journey, I did tell him I had some business of importance to attend to in the interior of that country. He declined to come, however, so I will have to jog along by my lonesome. I know I shall miss him very much, but you know the old saying, 'the best of friends must part.'

"I am in an A-1 condition and feel fit to tackle an army. I am also writing to the folks at home, but not a word about the purpose of my trip, as none but father knows anything about it. So 'mum' is the word for the present.

"So long, Mr. Courtney, and be ready to wire the War Department that the enemy is ours. Will let you hear from me again as soon as there is anything doing.

"Yours very truly,

"JAMES MORGAN.

"Frederick W. Courtney, Esq.,
"Attorney and Counsellor-at-law,
"Boston, Mass."

I could not help smiling as I laid down Jim's letter. It was so characteristic of the boy—man at all times. Serious, of course, but seriousness leavened with that streak of boyish boisterousness and devil-may-care air that is bound to crop out in the young under all circumstances.

I picked up Starmanow's letter and began reading it with a great deal of curiosity.

"PANAMA, April 20, 19—.

"DEAR FRED,

"I suppose I have you wondering how I came here. Perhaps Jim Morgan has told you—if you have read his letter, first. If not, permit me to furnish you with the information. I came here by way of the Atlantic Ocean; sailing on board the S. S. Unidos Estades, New York to Colon, then by railroad across the Isthmus and here I am in Panama. You may also, perhaps, be wondering why I permitted that steamer to take me so far from you and home. If that is so, I will satisfy your curiosity to the extent of informing you that I was not shanghaied, but went aboard the steamer of my own free will. Furthermore, I am not certain just what they may have done to me when we reached mid-ocean,—if I had not had the foresight to procure a sort of certificate signed, stamped and delivered for a valuable consideration prior to sailing time.

"Seriously, however, Fred, I could not rest; to go somewhere, to get a change of scene seemed to be an imperative necessity. I got so that I would stare at every woman I met—everlastingly seeking the vision of my dreams—the girl with the dark blue eyes. No doubt I needed a vacation, so I took one. Apparently it is a fashionable one, too.

"Panama seems to be the mecca of all good Americans just now, and with good reason at that. The people of the United States may be justly proud of its achievements. What France with its traditions, its genius and its wealth was compelled to abandon as a failure, your Uncle Sam bravely undertook and completed with neatness and dispatch. Let us hope

that civilization and human advancement will benefit by the result.

"Now about young Jim Morgan, whom I met for the first time on board the S. S. Unidos Estados. He seems to be a very likeable young fellow—said you were his friend, as well as his family's attorney. He also said that he was on the way to the interior of Ecuador, on a business mission.

"The interior of Latin America, I hear, is not entirely safe hunting ground for a single-handed North American boy. I would suggest your making my views known to his family. I would do so myself, but I have not the pleasure of their acquaintance.

"This boy, Jim, fascinates me somehow. I do not remember ever having met him before, yet it seems to me that somehow, somewhere, he has entered my life, but I cannot recall when or where. I find myself watching and studying his features, endeavoring to recall something, but without success.

"Well, Fred, I guess you will at least give me credit for writing you a good long letter. I was bound to give you no room for complaint on that score. I must not, however, attempt to impose on your good nature by adding anything further at this time, excepting, of course, that it is my earnest desire that you convey to Mrs. Courtney my sincere regards and to little Billy my unbounded affection. With best wishes,

"Faithfully yours,

"HIRSCH."

"Frederick W. Courtney, Esq.,
"Boston, Mass."

I sat there a long time with these two letters before me, actually day dreaming. I mentally sought in the distant future the probable result of all this, but never for one instant did I discern the various links that destiny was forging to bring about the revelation the future had in store, nor did it reveal to me the fact that I was one of the master mechanics unwittingly at work obeying destiny's commands. Time was to show that I was, but I was not aware of it just then.

PART II

JIM'S STORY

CHAPTER VII

ECUADOR

A sun spot may be hot enough but it reflects no light.

TRAVELLING always had a great fascination for me. As far back as I can remember, from the very earliest days of my boyhood, I had a yearning desire to visit distant places. I had also a love of adventure and read all sorts of books on the subject which only intensified my desires. These inclinations had eventually a great deal to do with my choice of a profession.

I fostered the hope of travel and adventure by taking up mining engineering as the most likely calling to furnish me with the greatest opportunity for its indulgence.

I had graduated the previous year, and was still looking for a suitable opening when this Chimborazo affair came along.

And, although I was very sorry for father and for the loss it might mean to all of us, yet I must confess that I was almost carried away with the thought of travel and adventure which it offered.

I had little or no knowledge of Ecuador or any of the other South American countries, other than that gleaned through the study of geography at school. Nevertheless, I made ready for my journey

with confidence that equalled my enthusiasm, and allayed, in some measure, the family fears.

Father was somewhat troubled about the danger. "Danger nothing," I insisted, "as if a fellow had to be coddled all his life."

Mother and sisters, particularly Ruth—had to be mollified and their fears quieted. I thought they'd never let me go, although so far as they knew I was going only as far as Panama where I was to take up a position at my profession.

Then, of course, there was Jean. That was still worse in a way for I disliked the thought of leaving the little girl behind, even though for a short while.

"Panama," she repeated, when I told her— "Oh, Jim, must you really go?"

"Sure thing; very important. Do you care, Jean?"

"Of course, you silly Jim; we are all going to care dreadfully—mother and sisters—and everybody."

At that, before I knew what I was about, I had her folded in my arms—just for a moment or two—before she broke away from me.

"Don't stay away too long," she admonished, as I was leaving, and I thought I detected just a little quiver in her voice and a trace of mist in her dear eyes. "Take good care of yourself, and come back soon."

I took one last look—I didn't dare to trust myself another moment in her presence—and went quickly. Dear Jean, I sure did hate to leave her.

However, I was off at last. My first experience—that of a life on the ocean waves—was not at all as pleasant as I had anticipated. In fact, if it had not

been for Hirsch, the first few days would have been somewhat lonesome and I would perhaps have been a little homesick, too.

It was all right thought after a while, and when I bade Hirsch goodbye at Panama, I was resolute enough to circle the globe single-handed.

I sailed from Panama on a Wednesday and arrived at Guayaquil on Saturday of the same week. How outlandish and unusual this part of the world did look to me. I could scarcely accustom myself to the thought that I was still on the American Continent.

At the suggestion of the Steward on board the ship, I went directly upon landing to the Hotel Aleman. That same day I casually mentioned the Chimborazo Mine to the hotel keeper—a German by the name of Housenfus, who spoke English very well. I endeavored to elicit from him some information about the place.

"Shimborazo Mine? No, I haf never herd of shutz a blace," he made reply to my inquiry. "Ja, der is der Shimborazo Moundain," he explained, "aber of der mine I know noddings."

Most of the people I met spoke the Spanish, or Lengua Castellana as they termed it—the language of the country. There were a few, however, who spoke English. With these I sought acquaintance, and endeavored through them to obtain some information concerning the mine, but all to no avail.

By Sunday noon I had about made up my mind that either the mine did not exist at all, or that its whereabouts had been kept so secret that the people of Guayaquil knew nothing about it.

I finally decided to test the question of its existence by paying a visit to the region described in the company's letter to father. I had made memorandum of these, which I carried with me.

I sought Mr. Housenfus again, and telling him of my intended journey, I asked him if he could recommend a man in whom I could place implicit confidence to act as my guide.

"Si, ja, sure; I know shutz a man," he assured me. "I vill ride away ged him vor you."

Sure enough, about an hour later he came along the hotel lobby with a small, thin, wiry little chap—a fellow perhaps not over five feet two or three—whom he introduced to me as "Mister Edward Wadkins."

My prospective guide looked to be about thirty years of age, or thereabouts, and although I could see at a glance that he was a white man, yet the color and appearance of his skin was like that of parchment.

"Dey calls Misder Wadkins Goushu Ned for short," elaborated Housenfus by way of further introduction—"Goushu—rubber—grude rubber," he explained in answer to my perplexed and quizzical look of inquiry. "Ned he always is vor goushu looking, ja."

"Where are you from?" I questioned, addressing Watkins.

"Cockney; London you know, sir."

"Do you speak Spanish?"

He grinned, showing his yellow teeth, more yellow than his parchment-like skin if that could be possible. "Halmost better than my mother tongue," he

replied. "I came 'ere when a boy of fifteen—as a cabin boy on board the barque Hempress, and have remained 'ere ever since, sabe? I have been over the territory between 'ere and Quito many times and know it better than the streets of London."

"Are you familiar with the territory in the neighborhood of the Mountain of Chimborazo?"

"Si Senor, sure sir."

"All right," I said to Mr. Housenfus. "I guess Mr. Watkins will do all right." When Mr. Housenfus departed, Watkins said, "You can call me Ned, sir, if it's all the same to you, sir. Everybody calls me Ned, sabe?"

"All right, Ned," I said, smiling. The word "sabe" had me going. Almost everybody seemed to use it as a finishing touch to their sentences. I learned later that it was equivalent to our words "you know" or "understand."

"Let us sit down and talk matters over, Ned," I invited. "I guess I need your advice as well as your service."

"Bien, all right, sir."

We placed a couple of chairs in a corner and sat down.

"Have you ever heard of the Chimborazo Mine?"

"Chimborazo Mine? No, sir."

"Do you know of any gold or copper mine in the neighborhood of the mountain of Chimborazo?"

"I know that attempts 'ave been made to do mining out there, but I never 'eared that it was successful, sabe?"

"Well, I don't know as I sabe yet or not. Do you know the locality well?"

"Si. Yes, sir."

"Very well, I want you to take me there."

"Bien. All right, sir," he nodded. "You want to find some mine near Chimborazo. Very good. Best way to go is by boat to Babahoya, then across country to Guaranda and Chimborazo and maybe you will find what you are looking for. We could go part way by rail, but that would interfere with our taking 'orses along. We 'ave to take 'orses along, sir, as I am not sure as you could get any out there. If we were to go to Guaranda by rail we would 'ave to work backwards to the west with the chances of missing the very spot that you might want, sir. I would say that going by boat and taking 'orses along to Babahoya would be the best plan, sir. Sabe?"

"All right," I said. "When do we get a steamer?"

"To-morrow morning, sir, nine o'clock."

"Very well, can you have the horses and other necessaries ready by that time?"

"Yes, sir."

"Good; then go and get ready."

With that Ned left me, promising to return before the day was out. Towards evening he came with a man whom he introduced as Don Domingo. This party had horses and saddles for sale or hire. After some bargaining, Ned acting as interpreter, I finally agreed to pay two hundred pesos (Ecuadorian dollars) for two saddle horses with equipments, with the understanding that if they were returned in good condition within one month I was to have one hundred pesos refunded. I paid the money, and Ned promised to meet me at the hotel the next morning in good time to take the boat.

I was up bright and early the next day, anxious to make the start. I knew that every hour counted—that it was imperative I should return home as soon as possible. And there was Jean, darling little Jean, whose picture I carried with me to gaze upon occasionally, and to dream about when alone in the silence of the night—whose sweet smile was ever beckoning, and whose parting words "Come back soon" were ever ringing in my ears.

At eight o'clock Ned was at the hotel. He looked me over critically, as well as the baggage that I was getting ready for the journey.

"All you need for wear, sir," he suggested, "is sombrero, shirt, pantaloons and shoes. All the rest of your trappings you had better leave 'ere at the 'otel; also any money you don't need, sir, sabe? You need no coat," he continued, "these will do better," and he exhibited two large heavy shawls with slits in the centre of them which he had brought along with him.

"What are those?" I queried.

"Paltas; can be used as cover or blanket when traveling; much better than coat in this climate."

It took us but a short time to arrange everything and get ready. I settled with Housenfus and bade him goodbye, leaving with him a substantial part of my funds for safe keeping.

On the way to the boat Ned insisted on purchasing two machettes (large dangerous looking knives almost the length of an ordinary sword with a blade about three inches wide); also two muskets, with a plentiful supply of cartridges.

"It ain't safe traveling in these 'ere parts, sir," he

said, "without these weapons to defend yourself against man or beast." So the weapons and ammunition were bought and taken along. We found the boat moored at one of the wharves. The horses were already aboard; two small animals almost the size of ponies.

"They are all right, sir," Ned assured me when he saw I was looking them over. "They are strong and safe and good 'ill climbers."

"How much of a sail is this to be?"

"Well, we ought to make Babahoya at four this afternoon."

At promptly nine o'clock the steamer's siren blew its three shrill blasts of farewell and steamed out on her trip up the famous Gyayas River, the largest tributary, as I was told, to the Pacific on the South American Continent.

The boat we were on was small and rickety, and with the live stock carried and the freight continually shifting about, it looked at times as though she would never hold together long enough to reach our destination. The captain and the pilot did not seem to take the burden of their duties very seriously. They spent a great deal of their time taking pop shots at the ugly crocodiles that were basking in the sunshine on the shores on either side of us. I was unable to tell if any of the shots hit their mark. But often, at the noise made by the discharge of the gun, the reptiles would wake up and lazily plunge into the river.

The boat stopped during the day at several of the villages and plantations (haciendas they called them) that dotted the river front; this made the trip seem

interminable. To my great surprise we arrived at Babahoya at promptly four o'clock. When I voiced my surprise Ned grinned.

"These fellows don't look as if they would get anywhere," he said, "but they do, sir. They don't worry any but they get there just the same; that is the one lesson at least any white man can learn out 'ere."

"That may be so," I said, "but by the looks of things it's the last place on earth I'd care to spend the rest of my days."

He looked at me kind of hard. "Well, maybe, sir, maybe you're right, sir, but there are worse places than this even across the pond," he defended. "Sabe?"

We spent the night at Babahoya at a small hotel built of unfinished logs and boards. We were up at six the next morning. At seven we were in our saddles and on our way to Guaranda. As we jogged along in a northeasterly direction the Andes Mountains ranged in front of us silent and awe-inspiring, with the king of them all, the mountain of Chimborazo, rearing its snow-capped peak into the heavens. It was the first glimpse I had had of this world-famous monstrosity of which I had heard so much and at whose foothills I was now to seek either fortune or disappointment.

Twice we stopped on the way—to rest our horses and to take refreshments. We arrived at Guaranda, however, in good time—three o'clock. After we had seen to our horses, we washed up and had dinner—four o'clock is dinner time in Ecuador—at the only hotel in the place. As soon as dinner was over, I

sent Ned out to poke about and see if he could find any clew as to the whereabouts of the mine. According to calculation we were now probably in the nearest town to it.

Within an hour he returned having in tow a tall, lanky native, with stooped shoulders and of uncertain age. Ned led him directly to a table on the hotel veranda, motioning for me to join them, and when I did so we all sat down.

"This," he said, introducing the native to me, "is Don Miguel, the boss Muleteer of Guaranda and a friend of mine. 'e speak English some, don't you, Don?"

"Si Senor, yes, poco," replied the Don.

"Don Miguel can tell us something about the mine we are looking for, sir," said Ned, giving me a perceptible wink. "The Don, sir, would perhaps take kindly to some myorka, sir," he added, favoring me with another wink.

"All right," I replied, "order what you want."

Ned ordered a bottle of myorka, a strong alcoholic drink in general favor among the natives of these parts, and filled our glasses.

"Bieno Amigo," cried Ned, slapping Don Miguel on the shoulder, after several drinks had been taken in which I pretended to join. "Now you tell my patrone 'ere what you 'ave told me."

Don Miguel very methodically and without any hurry first filled for himself another glass full of myorka and gulped it down, and as deliberately wiped his mouth with the back of his hand.

"I, Don Miguel, I be the boss Muleteer mucho years, sabe? I know all di country bien."

I nodded affirmatively. I saw he was a little mixed in his English, but it was all right. "Take your time," I said encouragingly.

"Bueno amigo mio, ver' good. By'n by Gringo (white man) he coom, he say 'Don,' he say 'Don, me have mucho sackos to taika abordo el steamer. Coom, you taika 'em,' sabe?"

I again signified that I understood.

"Bien, ver' good;" I say. "Senor, adonda? Ver is el sackos?"

"Oh," he say, "yo coom taika yo' mens an' yo' burros an' yo' coom me show you de place." Bien, me taika two mans y' five burros an' we all go to the mountains a Chimborazo. Sabe? Bien. We coom a el mountain; he el Gringo Senor he have una hacienda der; sabe? He show me mucho a plenty sackos. He say "you' go on taika 'em." I say "ver' good," I lifta 'em. I say "Senor, what yo' gotta der mi amigo?" An' he say "Tagua." I say "Tagua?" He el Senor Gringo he smile ver' funny smile an' he say "Si Don et is tagua."

"Ha; el Senor Gringo he tinka Don Miguel he no sabe; he one fool. Mia sabe. Dem sackos no have tagua, dey have ore, metales; mia comprender, sabe?"

"I don't quite understand," I interrupted. "What is tagua?"

"Tagua," replied Ned, "is palm tree nuts. They look like, and are as 'ard as ivory. They 'ave quite an industry of it 'ere."

"Oh," I exclaimed, "then Don Miguel does not believe that the stuff in those sacks was tagua. He thinks they contained metal ore."

"Si, me know," insisted Don Miguel. "Yo' observar-sabe? El sackos no have tagua. No mucho. Him have metales sure, sabe?"

"Did you make many trips? Did you go many times?" I questioned Don Miguel again.

"Si Senor, mucho taimes; fiva sixa taimes," he replied.

Ned and I looked at each other knowingly. We continued to question the Don and got him to describe the location of the place and the route he took to get there. This he did—partly in broken English and partly in Spanish. Ned was finally sure he could find the place. I felt rather inclined at first to take the Don along with us and have him show us the place. But Ned insisted that after what Don Miguel had told us he would be suspected of treachery if seen with us, and in that event we'd never be permitted to get near the mine, and perhaps run into trouble. I saw the sense of Ned's objection and acquiesced in our going alone, so after bidding the Don good night, we turned in, believing that our journey's end was near.

We were ready to start early the next morning. Ned was of the opinion that without mishap we should reach the mine by four o'clock in the afternoon. We had taken the main road, going in a westerly direction. By noon we came to a small hacienda, where we stopped for refreshments and to water our horses.

We rested for about an hour and then resumed our journey, going in the same direction as that of the morning until we came to a narrow crossroad. Here we halted, hesitating which way to go. Ac-

cording to Don Miguel one of these side trails led directly to the mine. It was my belief that the Don had said northwesterly, but Ned was as equally positive that he had said northeasterly. Either branch of the crossroad apparently led to the mountain side as the tall peak of the Chimborazo reared its mighty head into the clouds directly in front of us, with the lower Andes ranged in sombre silence on either side of it. As Ned was the guide I gave way to his judgment and we took the northeasterly trail, entering it at about two o'clock.

We continued along this path about two hours. The low flat lands which bordered the main road gave way to thick underbrush; thick underbrush gave way to woodland, and woodland—excepting for the trail which we were on—to an impenetrable magnificent forest. Our path became so narrow that we had to travel in single file with Ned leading. We carried our muskets cross saddle, ready for any emergency. We proceeded at a jog trot pace, the snakelike windings of the trail making fast going impracticable.

It was all very wonderful. About us were birds of great variety and dazzling plumage, the like of which I had never seen. They filled the air with their calls, shrill cries and song. It was a woodland of enchantment; the trees sparkled with their effulgence of golden colored fruits. Oranges, lemons, mangoes peeked forth from amid a great profusion of golden pear shaped cocoa bearing Masorcas. Here and there the low, flexible banana and platano trees intermingled with the more hardy and giant-like timbers. The shady palm tree, with its tagua

nut covered trunk, and the green gutta percha, with its promise of untold wealth, interested Ned most.

"These trees, sir," he explained, "hare has valuable as a gold mine hand less exhaustible. 'Ow, many is the time, sir," he went on reminiscently, " 'ave I been through the like o' these parts, sir, poaching a little bit, just for the little that was in it, sir, hand meaning no 'arm. Hand many is the close squeeze hi've had on haccount of it, sir." The ring of his merry laughter echoed through the woodlands at the recollection. "One time, sir," he went on, "me hand a German chap named 'erman 'ad nearly twenty greasers chasing us into Hambato, a place not far from 'ere. Hit was a close shave, that sure was, sir, but we got haway from them. I'll show you has 'ow it is done, sir." And suiting action to word and before I could offer any objection if I was so minded, he had dismounted, and I was obliged to do likewise.

"Heasiest thing in the world, sir," he explained, hitching our ponies to a tree and standing our muskets alongside. Once or twice I thought I had heard a crackling noise in the woods. Ned must have also noticed it, for he remarked "lots of beasts in these woods, sir. Better lay your matchet down and 'old a musket 'andy, sir, in case of need, while I show you 'ow the trick is done." I did as I was bid. Ned meantime had quickly dug with his matchet a large hole at the foot of a gutta percha tree and sharply cut into its trunk. A large quantity of rubber sap thus released, flowed freely into the earthen basin and congealed. As I stood watching the operation, I heard a sudden commotion about us. I recall hear-

ing the cry of "ladrones," and Ned's warning cry in return. Before I had time to look around, however, or do anything, I received a terrific blow on the head, and I fell senseless to the ground.

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CHAPTER VIII

Taken Prisoner

A goblin sure was he,
A goblin bad and bold;
His genii were a band of slaves
And his only God was gold.

WHEN I regained consciousness I was gazing dazedly at the faint sun rays which were struggling to enter through the rifts in the frame walls of the room in which I was lying. I didn't quite realize at first what had happened or where I was. My contemplation of the streams of light was entirely subconscious. The sun was apparently setting. The glimmering rays grew fainter and fainter. I gradually became aware that I was lying on a hard wooden floor. I tried to raise my head, but a throbbing, aching sensation obliged me to let it rest again on its wooden support. I attempted to move my feet, but found them held firmly in a vise-like grip. I wondered what the matter could be —what was holding them so. By a superhuman effort I raised myself to a sitting position and was more stupefied than ever by the condition I found myself in. In the gathering gloom of the approaching night I beheld my feet encased in an ancient instrument of torture—prints of which I remembered see-

ing at some time or other—known as the "stocks."

I endeavored to recall where I was and how I came to this predicament—it was all so much like a dream to me, I couldn't understand it. Suddenly the brain fog lifted; my mind cleared and it all came back. The trip to the mine; Ned; the attacks. What was it all about? My mouth felt parched; near me stood a panican of water which I seized and drank ravenously of its contents. This refreshed me some.

I looked about me. I was in a fairly large loft or storehouse, two-thirds filled with bulging bags piled high almost to the rafters. I wondered what the time was and put my hand in my watch pocket, but found the watch gone, fob and all. I put my hand to where I carried my money and Jean's picture in a sort of bag suspended from my neck by a silk cord, but that also was gone.

I marveled what all this could mean. Was I at the mine or was I beset and robbed and now held captive by a band of thieves? Ned? Was Ned a confederate? But no, that could hardly be, I decided. Mr. Housenfus had unquestionably vouchsafed for his absolute reliability. What then could it be, I asked myself over and over again. If I only had some one to talk to—some one to question—to relieve my anxiety I fretted. I cried "hello" to attract attention until I was tired, without result other than the return of the racking pain in my head. I grew dizzy and had to lie down again. I became drowsy and fitful. Time dragged on interminably through the long hours of the night. I lay there in sort of feverish coma. Towards morning I must

have fallen into sound sleep. I was awakened by the opening of the barnlike door and sat up. The sun was again peeping through the slits in the walls, its needlelike rays sending sharp shooting pains to my eyes and head. A native approached and replenished my panican from a tin which he carried. He also placed near me some ship biscuits and a platano.

"Where am I?" I demanded, addressing the native. But his only reply was "me no sabe." With that he turned his back on me and made for the door.

"Hi, there," I cried after him, in desperation, "me want to see the boss—the patrone, sabe?" But he paid no further attention other than to cast a meaningless side glance at me as he stepped out and closed the door after him.

Well, this was a nice how do. I endeavored to review the situation again to decide upon some plan of action, but when I looked at my imprisoned feet I realized how futile any of my plans must be as long as I remained in that condition. I became nervous and depressed and wished I was dead. "A fine mess I have made of it," I moaned. "Here was father and Mr. Courtney relying upon my efforts and undoubtedly waiting impatiently to hear from me and I tied down like a beast for slaughter."

My eyes rested again on the food and water placed near me, and I turned from it with disgust. "Perhaps it would be better," thought I, "if I simply laid down and died and be done with it." But presently my better self revolted against these thoughts. "No one had forced me to undertake the trip," I reflected. "It was my own doing. Father was op-

posed to my going and I had insisted upon it. Ultimately, father had acquiesced, and Mr. Courtney had believed in and trusted me, and then there were mother and Jean and others. Was I now to act the coward? Of course not." My blood began to warm up; I began to feel more courageous again—"but what shall I do?" I cried aloud in my perplexity "what can I do?"

"Buckle up and fight it out," came the reply, and so susceptible was I just then to the nervous strain I was undergoing, that I could have almost sworn afterwards that I had actually heard some voice speaking to me. "Keep up your courage and bide your time; courage makes the man, sighs and groans win no battles. Courage supplemented by health and strength of mind and body can accomplish a good deal,—almost anything. Cowardice and timidity, nothing. Courage and strength need opportunity and these need food, water and common sense."

"By Jove," said I aloud, as if answering the voice speaking to me, "you're right. In union there is strength. Here goes."

I seized the tin pail of water and took a deep draught and moistened my hands, face and head. I then sallied in to make a meal of the platano and biscuits. I was still engaged in this enjoyable pastime when the door opened and in stepped a short, stocky black haired and black bearded man of about forty, dressed in the manner of the better class of gentry of the country. He was escorted by two natives. I glared up at him. He said something sharply to his escort and they got busy on the "stocks" and

released my feet. I heaved a sigh of relief and endeavored to rise, but my feet had become so numb that I could hardly move them. I retained my position on the floor and glared up at the man. I came to the conclusion that he was the chief into whose hands I had fallen.

"Where am I?" I demanded.

The chief spoke to one of his men in a sharp, authoritative, gesticulating manner and to my great surprise I soon learned that the fellow thus addressed was able to speak broken English and to act as interpreter.

"The patrone he say," said he to me presently, "he say now he gotta you at las'; he make you pay for all you steal, sabe?"

"Got me at last! Steal!" I exclaimed, surprised and indignant. "Well, sir, you tell your boss that he can't put any of that stuff over on me. Who is he anyway and where am I?" I demanded to know.

"You are in de hacienda Louis Raga," he explained, "an' him is el patrone Don Pedro."

"Very well," I said, "that's all right. Now you tell your patrone that I am in a great hurry and must get away from this place at once; where is my guide Watkins?"

"Him say," interpreted the fellow again, "him say tother fella him sent to the Calaboos el Quito; him ol' thief he say. Him say you young fella an he keepa you here for peon till you paya him for de rubber you steala from him."

This was certainly adding insult to injury and I listened to the indictment filled with mortification. But recalling Ned's bragadosa of his escapades

I could see where a great deal of misunderstanding and trouble might arise.

"Look here," I pleaded in a conciliatory tone of voice, "your patrone is mistaken. I am no thief. I am an American mining engineer on a trip of inspection of a mine at the Chimborazo. Ned Watkins was my guide. I had never seen him before a week ago."

"Him say," said the interpreter after he and Don Pedro had talked excitedly for some time, "him say no good; him men cotcha you with tother mans stealin di rubber all right. Him say you have to stay here an' wurka a la peon tilla you paya him four ter five hundred pesoes for di rubber you steala, sabe?"

"Look here," I cried with indignation, getting to my feet, "you tell your boss that I am no thief; that I owe him nothing and that I am not going to be his peon or anything else. If he keeps me here against my will, I will get word to the United States consul and he will pay dear for all this."

"Him say, no kera," replied the native, "him say you musa wurka; no wurka no getta eats, sabe?"

"By George, we'll see about that," I cried with heat, as Don Pedro was leaving, followed by his escort, "we'll see about that."

Nevertheless, I again felt greatly depressed and sat down to think matters over. I felt somehow that perhaps legally they had me. Ned Watkins was undoubtedly a rubber thief, of which, of course, I was totally unaware when I hired him. Mr. Housenfus probably did not realize the enormity of the man's actions. Be that as it may, there was no

doubt that I was caught in his company at a time when he was tapping one of the rubber trees.

I was interrupted in my meditations by the loud ringing of a bell. It sounded like a church bell to me. I decided to find out what it was all about. I was apparently free to be about so I got up, picked up my sombrero and went outside.

The sun was still young and the morning air cool. I judged it to be about seven o'clock. A road dotted with bamboo huts extended to either side and I saw several men, all presumably natives, straggling in my direction. Some were carrying machettes, whilst others were leading mules that had large square bags hanging at their sides suspended from centre pieces thrown over their backs. I looked about me. I was standing at the side of a large house built of rough boards, the first floor of which had served as my prison. The ringing of the bell came from the upper part of this house and the newcomers ranged in front of it. To the right of me was the river—not a very wide stream, its waters coursing southerly. The water looked cool and inviting, so I stepped down the bank and refreshed myself by splashing the water over my hands, face and head. Anything more substantial in the form of ablution—a swim, for instance—seemed out of the question, for the ugly crocodiles could be seen sporting about in the water.

When I returned to the mansion house, there was quite a gathering assembled in front of it. In addition to the men on foot and the several mules there were now added two men on horseback, officials of some sort apparently. I learned later that they were assistant Majordomos, each having charge of a gang

of peons. The bell had stopped ringing by this time, and the Patrone stepped forward to the railing of the veranda of the mansion house and began calling out names from a list he held in his hand to which some of those present responded. I watched the proceedings with some interest. At the conclusion of the calling of the list, the men, in response to some commands bellowed by the assistant Majordomos, faced about and started off straggling up the road, some of them leading and some driving mules; the two Majordomos bringing up the rear on horseback. I remained standing where I was, not understanding what was going on about me. The whole scene seemed so strange and unnatural.

Presently the door of the mansion house opened and out came the Patrone accompanied by the interpreter.

"What es you' name?" questioned the interpreter, addressing me.

"James Morgan," I replied.

"El Patrone he say," went on the interpreter, "he say you mus' go to wurka like uder men. He say, you go wurka, sabe?"

"Please tell him," I said vehemently, "that I am being held here without right and against my will. I have been robbed here. Any one who helps to keep me here without my consent will have to answer for it to the law. I must ask to be allowed to leave this place at once."

The interpreter and the patrone took up their conversation again in Spanish and were at it for some time.

At last the interpreter turned to me again, saying,

"El patrone he say no sabe. He knows nothing. He say you wurka till he got his money pay back. He say 'gain no wurka you no geta eats."

With that and before I could make any further parley they both walked away to disappear within the mansion house. For some minutes I stood there undecided what to do. I loathed to join the army of nondescripts I had seen that morning. Neither their appearance nor manner was inviting. They seemed to have been driven off like so many cattle. It is true I remembered that I was a prisoner, but then that did not prevent my manhood from revolting against the whole thing. The threat that if I did not go to work I was not to get any food did not trouble me very much. I wasn't hungry anyway.

I pushed my sombrero to the back of my head, stuck my hands into my trouser pockets and started on a brisk walk up the road on a tour of investigation, whistling "Yankee Doodle" as loudly and as defiantly as I could.

CHAPTER IX

MERCEDES

A sunflower was she
'Mid the bramble close,
Her heart was that of a child
With the soul of a rose.

AS I walked along, the bamboo huts which I passed, as well as the road itself, showed no signs of life. I was surprised, therefore, to find my humble efforts at a rendition of that famous patriotic melody "Yankee Doodle" interrupted by a woman's voice calling sweetly and languidly, "gringo, gringito."

The words came to me barely above a whisper, but I heard them. I turned my head slightly, somewhat surprised and hesitating, though I did not entirely stop either in my walk or musical efforts. The lady must have noted my hesitancy, and, feeling perhaps that I would get out of earshot, she called again a little louder and a little more persistently, almost pleadingly, "gringito, gringito." I paused, stopped whistling, and turned about to ascertain, if possible, if the call was actually meant for me.

There was no doubt about it the moment I caught the young lady's eye—for young she was all right—I could see that even at the distance between us.

She was prettily framed in the doorway of a bamboo hut, one of those I had passed but a few moments before. With her left hand she was holding on to the door frame and with her right beckoning to me to retrace my steps—to come back to where she stood.

There was nothing to do but obey. Instinctively I removed my hands from my trouser pockets and almost with the same motion the sombrero. As I approached, her lips curved into a sweet smile, but her eyes and face were somber—serious perhaps, would be the better word.

The hut, upon the threshold of which she stood, was a little more pretentious in size and build from the others; it was built on bamboo posts some four feet above the ground. This, I was later informed, is done to avoid unexpected and unbidden visits of the reptile family and their kindred with which these parts are infested. Steps, or rather a small ladder built of bamboo, led up to the hut's entrance and to where the young woman stood.

I glanced up at her inquiringly.

"Entrar," she said invitingly, motioning with her hand for me to step up and enter the hut.

I did as I was bidden; climbing up the four or five rungs of the ladder clumsily.

As I stumbled on to the threshold, my hostess retired inside the hut, where I followed. Stepping into the room I found myself bowing and salaaming to a middle-aged lady of undoubtedly Indian origin, who was standing in the centre of the hut and at whose side, now, also stood the young woman at whose invitation I had entered.

The interior of the hut consisted of one large room. The split bamboo walls, the open space between the upper part of these walls and the bamboo rafters of the palm leaf covered roof, as well as the front and rear doorways admitted the necessary daylight. At the farthest end of the room were suspended by varied colored quilted cords three gauzy mosquito proof bed-cases.

"Hablas Espanol?" questioned the younger of the two women kindly.

"No," I responded, shaking my head.

"Ingles?" she questioned again.

"No, American."

"Oh, American del nord," she remarked, nodding, "me know same as Ingles. Dis es my moder, Senora Lopez," introducing the elder lady with a motion of her head and both smiled their welcome and again I bowed and assured them of the great pleasure it afforded me to meet them.

"Then you speak English," I exclaimed, suddenly, realizing that the young woman had made the introduction in that language.

"Si, a lit-tel," she replied. "Mia padri, my fader, he was Ingles."

"Is that so? Is he here?" I questioned, with renewed hope at the possibility of meeting with a friend in these parts.

"No, he not he're; he de-ad, long ago when me a lit-tel girl es."

The elder lady sighed and I felt sorry for them. Both women were dressed in native fashion—not native Indian style, but the style in vogue among the women of the middle classes that I had noted

at Panama, Guayaquil and Babahoya; a sort of a fashion of its own, semi-European, somewhat gaudy and loud of color.

Senora Lopez offered me a bamboo stool. "Sentarse amigo," she said with a smile.

I took the stool she so kindly offered and sat down, the two ladies doing likewise.

"Mi moder," said Senorita Lopez, "she he-ar ha-bout you las' night. 'Pobre gringito,' she say. She all de time, how you say—sorray when the Ingles man in tro-ble es."

"I am American, you know," I said, smiling.

"Oh, yo si. I know, how you say?—no diferancia."

Senora Lopez kept smiling in sympathy, nodding her head and rocking herself to and fro. She left it to her daughter, however, to do almost all the talking. Both the girl and the mother interested me very much, not only because of the friendship they so kindly manifested—and I needed that badly enough just then—but also because of their own tragic story, which was evidenced by their presence. The Indian wife and mother with the English husband and father dead. Lopez, undoubtedly was a second husband and stepfather, with nothing worth while for the women to look forward to.

"You am going to stay here?" questioned Senorita Lopez again.

"I don't want to if I can help it," was my reply. "They have no right to keep me here against my will."

"Bueno," said Senorita Lopez. "Mi moder she say when she see you brung he're las' night, she say,

pobre gringito, poor sailor man. Em brung him he're he no go 'ome a la pais he de-ad sur're. Muchos sailor man he com' an' he die."

"I certainly don't want to die, just yet," I told her, gathering the drift of her information. "My people are waiting for me at home. I want to return to them as soon as I possibly can."

"Si," Senorita Lopez agreed sympathetically. "Madre cara, mi moder de-ar, she say when she see you com' she say, 'Mercedes alma mia Mercedes,' dat es my name, moder say, 'you call 'im; you call de muchachito gringito tell 'im to com' in. Maybe nostras we can help 'im some. Sabe?' "

I actually laughed, a real hearty laugh. That interrogation "sabe" coming from Mercedes got me going again. It was not until I caught her staring at me in silent wonder, not knowing of course the cause of my merriment, that I saw the impropriety of my action. I controlled my hilarity and apologized.

"You see," I explained, "some of the words sound so strange to me that I forget myself. I should love to speak the Spanish language. I shall know better than to laugh at some of its phrases when I do."

Mercedes smiled her appreciation.

"Senorita," I continued, "your evident sympathy encourages me to ask if there is any way that you and your mother can help me to get away from this place. I am not a peon. They have no right to restrain my liberty. The patrone is mistaken in the charges that he makes against me, but I have no immediate means at hand to prove my innocence. In my hurry to get away on the mission that called me

to Ecuador I forgot to take along necessary documents of identification, and yesterday when I was knocked down and abducted, I was also robbed of everything valuable, including my funds."

Both women followed me closely, endeavoring to comprehend what I said, and then held very earnest conversation between themselves in Spanish. I could not understand what they said, but I could see by their manner that it was concerning me.

At last Mercedes turned to me and said:

"You write let-ter to you' 'ome. I send away for you."

This set me thinking.

"A letter home," mused I, "will not only upset everybody there, but will take a long time at the best, before I can get action. A letter to the United States authorities may have the same result. Don Pedro and his men will undoubtedly swear that Ned and I were caught red handed tapping their rubber trees and how am I going to disprove it? With Ned convicted of taking part in the crime, I may have a hard time convincing any one here of my innocence." I was almost at my wits-end to know what to do when very suddenly the thought came to me—"Hirsch. Starmanow is undoubtedly still at Panama," I reflected. "He said he would remain there several weeks. I can reach him by letter in six or seven days. I think he will come to my aid, if I ask him. I will also request him to leave the State Department and the local United States Consul alone for the present, so as not to complicate matters; at least not to say anything about it until he arrives and I can talk matters over with him."

"I understand the name of this place is Hacienda Louis Raga, is that correct?" I inquired.

"Si; yaas," replied Mercedes.

"Thank you very much for your kind offer—I know now what to do. Have you any paper, envelope and a pencil or pen and ink that I may use to write the letter?"

"Si," replied Mercedes, rising to get these things for me.

"Me 'usband," said Senora Lopez, "es Majordomo."

"Oh, I see," I remarked, "he must be one of the two men I saw on horseback this morning."

"Si Don Lopez's was on grey 'orse; he very good man."

"Yes, ma'am," I agreed.

"You mus' go wurk til letre com' back," continued Senora Lopez, "es mas be-ter for you."

"Thank you," said I. "I know you mean it for my good, so I will do as you say."

"Bueno," continued Senora Lopez, evidently pleased. "You tella Don Pedro you go wurk an' he give you pe-lace una casa like dis. For to eat he keep plenty to sell."

I listened to this outline of my prospective expectations of peon life with resignation. The friendship of these two women seemed to make all the difference in the world to me, and I was now willing to make my fight for liberty on more rational lines. I gathered from what Senora Lopez said that I would be given a hut and would otherwise have to look after myself—a sort of camping out affair. Had it not been for the serious charge made against me by

Don Pedro and the effect my enforced delay might have on matters at home, I should have probably looked forward to my prospective experience as a valuable addition to the other instructions already obtained in my struggle for a mining engineer's diploma.

Mercedes had meantime found a pencil, paper and envelope, which she handed to me. I thanked her, and was about to commence writing when the thought occurred to me that I was absolutely without money, not a penny in my possession with which I could buy a food supply. I imparted the details of my predicament to the ladies and asked their advice.

"Ne-ber mine," consoled Mercedes. "Ne-ber mine, you go wurk. Don Pedro he give you all an' he write down in de libro."

"Ah," I said, somewhat relieved, "that will make it pleasanter, although I confess that I am a poor hand at cooking."

Mercedes smiled her encouragement. "O ne-ber mine. You come he're and mi moder caracita she will—how you say, te-ats you 'ow to cook, dat's eet."

I laughed with pleasure. I began to feel more at home with these good women befriending me the way they did.

"Thank you, ever so much, or how you say in Spanish—muchas gracias Senoras," and with a movement signifying a bow I laughed at my own effort to mimic Mercedes and to talk Spanish. Both the ladies joined in the merriment. The Senorita blushed and Dona Lopez exclaimed, "O muyo bueno, O ve-ry good, you speak de Spanish tambien like me soon."

I laid down my sombrero on the split-bamboo floor and commenced to write my letter to Hirsch, which took some little time, both women meantime busying themselves with their household duties. The letter written, I addressed it to Hirsch at his hotel at Panama. That done, I was about to hand the letter to Mercedes to mail when I was again embarrassed by the fact that I did not even have the required change necessary to pay the postage. She noticed my embarrassment and in answer to her look of inquiry, I explained my trouble to her.

"Oh, eet es bien," she hastened to assure me. "I have dinero. How you call in America?" she questioned mischievously showing me a piece of money.

"That," said I, "is money, change, silver."

"Bien, dat is good. Mo-ney. I have mo-ney. I will pay, good?"

"Very, but how will I ever repay you?" I cried, feeling the helplessness and indignity of my position.

"No mencion," she deprecated, shaking her head in the negative, "di plai-sure eet es all mine."

Senora Lopez, who had left the interior of the hut a few minutes before, now returned with a bowl of steaming hot coffee, a roll, a baked platano and some unrefined sugar, all of which she placed on the floor in front of me.

"Almorzar," she said, nodding. "You eat."

This kindly action on the part of the Senora almost caused me to lose control of my feelings. It had an extraordinary effect upon me. I did not dare to look up or move, for fear I would make a baby of myself. My experience of the last forty-eight hours must have affected my nerves. When threat-

ened with danger I had steeled myself to meet whatever came like a man, but now the friendly manifestation of the mother and daughter caused a reaction that brought me nearer to a breakdown than I ever was before in my life. For some moments my gaze was riveted upon the bamboo floor. I could hear the two women moving away as if to relieve my embarrassment. Then suddenly my eyes rested on the hot platano and the steaming hot coffee. It looked appetizing. I felt hungry. The lump in my throat gradually disappeared, and I smiled with gratification.

"Esta bien," Senora Lopez said, "you now eat before eet es cold get."

I needed no further urging and enjoyed a most hearty meal. Breakfast over, I thanked the ladies for their kindness and signified my willingness to look up Don Pedro and to inform him of my intentions to obey his orders, at least for the present. "But," said I, "as he neither speaks nor understands any English I shall be obliged, I suppose, to wait until the interpreter returns."

"Coom, I weel go weed you," volunteered Mercedes, while the Senora gave approval by a friendly nod of the head.

We found Don Pedro at one of the outlying buildings on the river front busily engaged in superintending the bagging of cocoa beans. He returned the greetings of Mercedes with a perfunctory nod and listened to what she had to say without stopping in his labors. When Mercedes had finished with what she had to say, he stopped long enough in his work to make reply. He spoke sharply and with strict

authority.

Mercedes listened to him attentively, and when he was through, she turned to me and said, "Don Pedro he say bien, you go wurk to-morrow; Hoy, to-day you feex up la casa for to make 'ome. I go; you wait he-re. By-um-by, com' an' see mi moder," then with a nod and a smile she added, "adios gringito," and she was off, leaving me gazing after her.

I remained where I was, awaiting Don Pedro's pleasure. Presently, he motioned me to follow him, which I did. First, we went to the mansion house, which he entered, leaving me waiting outside. He soon returned, nevertheless, accompanied by a negro boy. Both were carrying bundles. Don Pedro handed me those he carried and again motioning for me to follow, he wended his way up the road to where the peon huts were located. He stopped in front of one of these, not far from the one occupied by the Lopez family, but rather smaller in size.

In obedience to something Don Pedro said the colored boy threw the bundles he was carrying into the small hut. Don Pedro then turned to me and pointing to the hut with his right hand, let off a string of flowery Spanish, of which I didn't understand a single word, but I nodded my acquiescence. I knew what he meant all right even if I did not understand it in so many words, and I was going to see the thing through.

CHAPTER X

A Dash for Liberty

Unselfish love to my mind
Is the most precious gift to mankind.

I FOUND the quarters assigned to me to be an empty one-room hut, much smaller than that occupied by the Lopez family. As I stood there in the middle of the room surveying its bamboo walls and flooring and palm leaf roof, I could not help smiling at the extraordinary change a few short weeks had worked in my life. It was a great come down indeed from a happy and care free young American with bright prospects and everything good to hope for, to the life of a peon in a Southern Pacific wilderness with the probability of being obliged to make a heroic fight for life and liberty. The situation seemed unreal and scarcely credible, yet there I was. However, I did not despair now. I was ready to meet whatever might come and felt that at the proper time my training as an engineer would stand me in good stead. I began to undo my bundles and open out the small packages.

"Well, not so bad, after all," I ruminated. "Rice, beans, potatoes, coffee, cocoa, flour and fat, an earthen pot, a tin pan, a tin cup, a table knife, spoon and teaspoon; a mosquito proof bed cover, similar

to those I had seen at the Lopez's only not so fancy, and a blanket."

"It seems as if this ought to do me for the present," I thought. "The cooking, of course, will be the rub, but then necessity is a good teacher, and no doubt I will learn in time." With that I began to put my house in order and by noon I had it in ship-shape condition.

In the afternoon I paid the Lopez family another visit to ascertain how they did their cooking, for I saw no fireplace anywhere. To my surprise I found that fires were built camp fashion in the rear of the huts. I hadn't noticed that before. Senora Lopez also pointed out where in the nearby woods there was quite an orchard of platano trees, which as well as a vegetable called yucca the peons were free to take for their own use.

The yucca was very peculiar. In shape it resembled a carrot, but was white in color; a sort of a wick ran through its centre, while in taste it was a cross between paraffine and potato. The Senora also kindly initiated me into the mysteries of platano, in its various forms, for food consumption. In its unripened state baked it took the place of bread, cooked in water it took the place of potatoes; ripened it was good raw, cooked or fried. In fact, like the manna of old, it could be made to fill the place of almost any dish one's heart desired.

The stew of rice and beans, though, I found to be the most staple food relied upon by the peons. In the art of properly preparing the dish, Senora Lopez was also good enough to instruct me. Of meat, I was further informed, there was but little, and that

only at uncertain and infrequent periods. Once in a while a steer was obtained, at other times bird meats were available, particularly the meat of parrots, whom the peons were encouraged to slaughter on account of their partiality to the cocoa bean, which was the chief product of the hacienda.

The day passed very quickly, and not without its gain, for by sunset I could have qualified as an expert chef. I slept that night in the privacy of my mosquito curtain, and awoke early the next morning long before the ringing of the mansion bell.

I made my breakfast of baked platano and coffee with the addition of fresh biscuit brought over by Senorita Mercedes with the compliments of her mother. This was quite a treat, for I found that bread in any form was very scarce at the plantation.

Soon after I responded to the call of the hacienda bell and was given a machette and sent to the gang in charge of Don Lopez.

We started out shortly after seven o'clock and entered almost immediately into a deep forest, wild in its grandeur and nearly every second tree of which bore the cocoa fruit. The trees nearer the clearing, however, had all been stripped of the fruit, so that it was fully half an hour's march into the heart of the forest before we reached the place where the day's work was to commence.

In a way it was very simple. The fruit grew plentifully on the trunk as well as the branches of the tree. The underbrush, which was thick and high, was first cleared away by men with machettes and hooks, so that the trees could be reached and the fruit obtained without too much difficulty. Then

others with pruning knives attached to long bamboo poles followed, detaching with these implements the fruit from the tree, which was allowed to fall to the ground. Another set of men who followed slit the fruit open and extracted from the pods the cocoa beans, which hung loose on a vegetable gut on the inside of it. The beans were then placed in canvas bags and carried by the mules to the hacienda, where they were cured by having their gluten coating rubbed off and by being dried in the sun.

At ten o'clock we halted for luncheon. This meal was furnished by the patrone. At ten-thirty we commenced work again, which was continued until four o'clock in the afternoon, at which time our labors ceased for the day and we returned to the hacienda.

I was assigned to the bush-clearing gang. The work, which had to be done in a half-stooping position while on the go, was uninteresting and tiresome. The only relief obtained from the monotony of the day's work was the occasional diversion furnished by some particular large reptile or the visible signs of a number of the wild cat family abounding in those woods. There was no variation. Each succeeding day was like the one that preceded it, excepting, perhaps on Saturday, when in the evening after the day's work was over, the peons were furnished with all the Myorka they could imbibe—this kept things lively until the wee hours Sunday morning.

My friendship with the Lopez family continued, and most of my evenings were spent at the doorsteps of their Casa. Our talks helped me materially to

learn more of the Spanish language. This pleased me very much, as I figured it would be of great service in the event of having to make a break for liberty.

I feared at first that Don Lopez might resent my visits, and spoke of it to Mercedes. She assured me, however, that such was not the case; that the Senora, her mother, had spoken to Don Lopez about me and that he would not mind it in the least. This was very gratifying.

Mercedes and I became fast friends. Her great delight was to have me relate to her the wonder of American life—"America Del Nord" as I knew it. It was the opening of a new book to her—the fairy tales of a magic world, a vista beyond her dreams. We would sit for hours sometimes—she listening with the rapture and simplicity of a child to the tales I would tell of our great cities. The tunnels under land and sea. Of our skyscrapers and Brooklyn Bridges. Of our autos and aeroplanes. Of our expositions and county fairs; our opera houses, theatres and the movies; of our summer resorts and boardwalks; of our colleges and schools and of our hotels and dancing parties, where young and old assemble to pulsate and whirl in a maze of color to the rhythm and strain of equally delightful music.

She would question me about the men and women and what they did, and how they dressed and lived. "Oh Shim, Shim," she exclaimed, pleadingly, one evening, as in answer to her questions I elaborated with more than usual fervor on some of the finer pleasures of life at home. "Oh, Shim, Shim, tak me der—tak me when you go; me wan-ta see you'

'ome—me wan-ta go wida you."

I was dumfounded and frightened. I never realized until that moment what our close intimacy might lead to—what it might mean to that poor child—that sweet sunflower 'mid the bramble close. Jean's dear face took form there in the moonlight and hung like an ariel vision between us. I knew then that my days at the hacienda Raga were numbered, no matter what the issue. I knew that I would never be unfaithful to my first love nor unfair to the faithful friend that was seated near me.

During the early part of my stay at the hacienda I made more intimate acquaintance with my interpreter of the first morning. He was a Peruvian by the name of Juan Garcia. In his younger days he had been a sailor and learned his English on board of some of the ships. He was intelligent and well informed on South American affairs. An uncontrollable love for Myorka kept him in the menial position of peon, although he was mentally superior to the position he occupied.

From him I had procured a great deal of information about the country and its people, its unsanitary state and its periodical revolutions. It was a world still in a virgin state, with thousands of miles of unexplored territory with its hidden treasures waiting for the hand of civilized man.

By careful and judicious inquiry I learned from Garcia all about the places and its approaches. There were only two known ways of egress from the wilderness in which we were located. One was the road by which I came; the other was by way of the river. All the surrounding country was an endless tangle

of jungle and forest, without known road or paths.

The road leading to and from the hacienda was guarded day and night. The river was also guarded by trustworthy natives on a settlement some three miles below. No one could leave by either way without permission of Don Pedro.

All this was not very encouraging for an attempt at escape on my part. In fact, any such undertaking appeared hopeless. However, I kept my eyes and ears open and my wits at work planning and weighing every possible chance in the event of my appeal to Hirsch should miscarry.

During my first ten days of peon life I was fairly patient. I knew it was too soon for Hirsch's reply, and with the friendship and encouragement of the Lopez family, bore my daily ploddings with fortitude. Nevertheless, as day after day passed by without news from Hirsch, I became impatient and worried. At the end of fifteen days I felt uncertain whether my letter had been forwarded, and spoke to Mercedes about it. She assured me that the letter had been dispatched by a most trustworthy friend, one she could vouch for. The possibility presented itself that Hirsch may have left Panama before my letter reached him. It might or might not have been forwarded to him. How could I tell? On the night when Mercedes made her appeal to take her with me I definitely decided to make a break for liberty at the first favorable opportunity.

I noticed that a bamboo raft was always moored on the river near the mansion house, and, although I knew that the river was guarded, I decided to make an attempt to escape in that direction. Notwith-

standing Mercedes' plea I knew enough of her to know that I could trust her, and so confided to her my resolve to leave the place.

Mercedes was very much disturbed about it. She cautioned me about the dangers of the attempt and advised that I wait two or three days longer. This I did. The next two days dragged along interminably. On the evening of the second day I informed her of my decision to make an attempt to leave the place the following day.

She was opposed to my going. When she saw I was determined, however, she acquiesced and finally agreed to assist me.

The next day I proceeded with my work as usual and when on my return for the evening I found no news awaiting me I decided to delay no longer. I prepared and ate my dinner and a little later went to have a chat with Mercedes and her mother. As soon as I was able to have a word alone with Mercedes I informed her of my intention to start that night. She begged me not to make the attempt until I heard from her later that evening. Soon after, I returned to my hut, there to await word from her.

About eight o'clock she passed in the direction of the mansion house, but without saying anything. At about ten ten o'clock as near as I could judge I saw her again. She was apparently on her way home. As she approached me, near enough so that I could hear her, she whispered two simple words, "Bueno; go."

I threw my palta over my shoulders, seized my machette and proceeded at once to the place where I knew the raft was moored. I took no baggage or

food with me and reached the raft without interruption. As I placed my machette on it and took hold of the painter to release it I was disturbed by a movement in the bushes which sent my blood cold, but the next moment Mercedes was standing before me.

"Oh, Shim, Shim," she said scarcely above a whisper, extending both her hands to me, "Adios, Shim, miah, adios."

I took her hands in mine; they were cold and trembled slightly. She had been a good and faithful friend, staunch to the last moment. "Good-bye, Mercedes," said I, aware for the first time of a tremor in my voice. She drew slightly closer and, extending her lips, said, "Kees me, Shim."

The words were more like a sigh than a whisper. I bent forward and kissed her lips, releasing her hands instantly.

CHAPTER XI

THE CHASE

Eagle wings nor arrow's dart
Could devour space the more
Than my heart's refrain
To be again
With the maid whose love I bore.

IMMEDIATELY after my parting with Mercedes, I seized the raft's painter and lifted it off the stump of bamboo tree over which it was looped and jumped on the raft. The next moment the current had seized it and I found myself being swiftly carried down the river. I bent down and seized the pole from the raft with which to guide it. When I stood up again I had passed the mansion house, and, so far as I knew, none were the wiser for it except Mercedes.

I guided my craft as well as I could and all went well for about half an hour. Suddenly I came to a very sharp bend in the river, and as the current, which was extremely swift at this point, carried me sharply around the bend I was brought up with a sudden jolt against a large tree that had fallen and was now lying diagonally across the full width of the stream. Massed in front of and clinging to the fallen tree were large quantities of debris and under-

brush which could not pass the fallen tree and which had accumulated since its fall.

The river was absolutely impassable unless I could clear it of this obstruction. The raft, forced by the terrible swift current against tree and underbrush, now dipped under my weight and I was forced to seek safety on top of the tree trunk to avoid being sucked under by the current. In the dipping of the raft my machette fell overboard.

I crept along the tree to the shore and got on terra firma once more, but my plight was terrible. Here I was, in the depth of a South American jungle and forest, in the dead of night, without the smallest weapon of defence. Furthermore, what was I to do in the morning? Follow the river? They would undoubtedly give chase as soon as they learned of my absence at roll call. How could I hope to escape?

I found a slight clearing and lay down. I saw the necessity of husbanding my strength for the morrow. The noises of the forest were all about me, noises I did not understand. They were gruesome, to say the least. As I lay there with my head propped against the trunk of a giant tree for a pillow, and my eyes gazing through the foliage at the heavens with its myriads of stars and the moon with its mystic light beating down upon me, I felt the awesomeness of God's creation, but no fear.

"I must go to sleep," said I to myself; "time will drag less slowly and it will be less lonesome." I closed my eyes and must have fallen asleep almost immediately.

I was awakened at the break of dawn by the

vociferous activity of birddom. I arose, went down to the river front and examined conditions carefully. The obstruction was of enormous size and bulk. Passage of the river at this point was absolutely impossible. I had no tools with which to clear the obstruction even if I could have done so without detection. I stood and pondered for a few minutes. I knew that just at the entrance to the hacienda there was a corral where the horses and mules were kept. If I could get to this corral before seven o'clock all might still be well. I knew that my own pony, the one I hired from Don Miguel, was kept in the corral. He was swift and reliable, and, once astride of him again, I felt that my chances of escape would be good. In fact, no matter how I planned that seemed to me to be my only salvation. I knew the direction in which to go. I could not miss it; the river would guide me.

I judged the time to be between four and five o'clock. Could I make the hacienda before seven? I did not know if that was possible, but I knew that I must try. I began to direct my steps in that direction. Fortunately, I had landed so near the hacienda that the woods in these parts were almost free of high brush excepting at the river front. In fact, I found on proceeding that I was even nearer the place than I at first thought. I had drifted on the raft for about half an hour, but there had been so many bends and curves that I must have gone but a short distance when I met with the obstruction.

In wending my way through the forest I cut across in a straight line, avoiding the bends whenever possible without losing sight of the river, but my prog-

ress was slow even as it was. In a little over an hour I began to catch glimpses of the hacienda and became more cautious in my advance.

It must have been about six-thirty when I came in view of the corral. I now bent forward and made a dash to the corral fence almost on all fours. I had not heard the hacienda bell, and none of the peons were to be seen in or about the place. I threw a hurried glance over the horses in the inclosure, most of whom were gamboling about, their halters hanging suspended on the pickets of the bamboo fence ready for immediate use. I sought my horse. Sure enough, there he was, standing all by himself, with ears cocked and his long, hairy, aristocratic tail and muscles taut, watching aloofly the antics of the others.

With a swift movement I was over the fence. In another second I had seized a halter in my right hand and the next moment, before even my astonished and nervous animal knew what I was about, I had the halter fast about his neck and was leading him swiftly to the gate. He gave a short low neigh as if of recognition and followed my lead with easy strides. As I unfastened and lowered the gate bars the mansion bell began to ring. Then I knew that I must act quickly, for it was now or never.

I vaulted on the back of my little friend and was off, but not before I was seen. I heard cries of amazement and chagrin behind me. They had recognized me, too, for I heard the word "gringo" distinctly. Then I heard swift running feet, undoubtedly making for the corral, but I did not falter or even turn my head to see who my pursuers were or

what they were doing.

I was astride my own horse again, free. I knew he was strong, I knew he could go. I had no spurs but I would not have used them even if I had. I simply patted the little animal on the neck and said "go it, old boy, we've got to beat them." He seemed to understand and went as fast as the condition of the path would allow him to go. My great fear was of the danger of his stumbling; the path was so treacherous.

Were they following me? I did not have long to wait for a reply. I soon heard the flying hoofs of the chase and the occasional cries of the riders.

"Caramba gringo," they hurled at me, "detener, Para, o yo a tirar. Caramba, pausa gringo," and similar cries and calls, but I paid no attention to them. I only patted and talked to my little friend who was carrying me to liberty. "We have got to beat them," I kept whispering to him. "Be careful, old boy; we've got to beat them; we must not be caught now."

My surprise was that he seemed to know that we were being chased and to realize what was wanted of him. His ears lay almost flat against his head; his neck stretched forward; his nostrils dilated; every muscle of his body was as taut and as vibrating as an arrow in its flight. It was grand, electrifying, invigorating. I knew I was in desperate straits. I realized that within a short time this chase might turn into one of life or death for me, yet I felt so happy that I could have shouted with joy and defiance, but thought better of it, to husband my strength for the coming struggle.

The path we were on was very narrow. I knew that as long as we remained in the woods my pursuers must proceed in single file, and that they could not make a detour to head me off or to surround me. What was to happen when we would reach the clearing I did not know—I could not tell, and it did not seem to bother me. All I knew was that I was still keeping my distance. I was getting away, I had to get away.

"Go it, old boy, go it," I urged my little friend, "but be careful," and I knew by the heave of his body that I could trust him as long as his heart within him lasted.

On, on we sped, and time and space sped with us, but how fast I did not know. "What was to be the end? How far would they pursue me?" Gradually I saw before me, expanding more and more, the open field and sky. The cries of my pursuers increased as the distance between us was apparently diminishing. Suddenly, as I burst into the open, I heard a cry as if of victory behind me, then a shout in front of me. I raised my head in surprise, and there, approaching me at a swift pace, were three horsemen. "Were they emenies or friends?"

They looked like natives from the distance and probably belonged to the hacienda. They must have been the cause of the shout of victory by my pursuers. I must avoid the newcomers. I swerved off the path into the open field to my left—another cry from behind me. A swish as of a flying dart. A long rope with a noose at its head flew into the air and squirmed and hovered in front and above and all about me like a gigantic snake on its mission of

A LONG ROPE WITH A NOOSE AT ITS HEAD FLEW INTO THE AIR

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destruction. I was seemingly heading for the centre of the noose. I knew it must encircle and drag me to the earth, but it was done so quickly, it came so much like a flash, that I was unable to avoid it. In fact, there was not time, nor chance, to get out of its way. Then, very suddenly there sounded the crack of a rifle shot and the noose like a large head swerved from its wriggling body fell harmless at my feet.

Then from the midst of the babel of voices that arose about me the imprecation and shouts of rage hurled at me by my pursuers and the answering shouts of derision and loud guffaws of others, I heard a voice calling me—a voice that sounded familiar.

"Jim, Jim," it called, "for the love of heaven, Jim, stop. It is I, Hirsch Starmanow. Do you hear me, Jim? Stop!"

I craned my neck to the right from whence the voice came and soon made out, to my great surprise and joy, the figure of Hirsch Starmanow. He was dressed as a ranchero, so that, at first glance, I scarcely knew him, but it was dear old Hirsch just the same, true to life, flying as fast as his horse would carry him to head me off.

CHAPTER XII

JOHN BROWN

Fate unbidden doth ever chide us
To partake of that which destiny hath in store.

THE chase was over. I gave one great triumphant cry of joy as I swung about and galloped at full speed to meet Hirsch. As soon as the distance between us closed we drew rein, alighted and embraced like a pair of school girls. It would be hard to say which of us was the happier.

Greetings over, we turned our attention in the direction from whence sounds of a sharp parley reached us. We quickly mounted our horses again and were about to make for the group of disputants, to add our weight to the argument, when we observed two of the horsemen—my pursuers evidently—turn their horses' heads haciendawards and disappear in the forest. The other two headed our way and came at a sharp trot to meet us.

"These are Don Camango and Don Strella," said Hirsch as they approached, "Amigos," he added in introduction; "this is my friend, my very good Amigo Senor Morgan, for whom we have been searching."

The two men acknowledged the introduction by lightly touching their sombreros. "Dem fellas," said Camango by way of information, "Dem fellas

dey not want fight. Dey go back el hacienda."

"Very well," said Hirsch, "but I guess we had better make for the main road just the same. There is no knowing but what they might be reinforced and change their minds. You, Camango and Strella, take the lead; we will follow."

"Both of these fellows," said Hirsch, as the two men rode off ahead of us, "speak fairly good English and as you must have noticed are excellent shots. I picked them up at Panama after I received your letter. They have both been employed on the plantations about here, they tell me, and know the neighborhood well."

"I should say so," I admitted gratefully.

In as few words as possible I explained to Hirsch all that had happened; the reason for my journey to Ecuador and the great necessity of my locating and if possible examining the mine without future delay. Hirsch looked somewhat grave when I touched upon the rubber tree tapping affair.

"I have learned," said he, "that quite a number of the plantation owners here take the law very much into their own hands when it comes to dealing with peons. It's a sort of makeshift for slavery. And the claim is made that work on the plantations would become paralyzed without that class of labor. The basis of the system is debt. Let a fellow once get into the clutches of the patrone and he is all done for, unless he is ransomed or works it off. In the latter case—at the rate of wage paid and the fact that the peon is obliged to make his purchases of necessaries of life at the plantation store house—it often means a lifetime. Even under the peon sys-

tem labor is scarce here, and it's not uncommon for sailors landing at Guayaquil to be enticed by runners to some of the haciendas. Don Pedro undoubtedly banked on his charge of theft to hold you for the amount he claims to have been stolen. However," concluded Hirsch, "if he should take it into his head to follow us up he will have his hands full."

Nevertheless, I felt somewhat disturbed by what Hirsch had said and we decided to call Camango and Strella into consultation. They were both of the opinion, however, that Don Pedro would not venture beyond the boundaries of his hacienda in a case such as mine. In fact, Camango made so little of it as to remove all doubt or fear on the matter.

When we had halted for breakfast I explained to Camango—who was apparently the more intelligent and best informed of the two men—of my search for the Chimborazo mine; the road we had taken; what Don Miguel had told us, of our uncertainty at the crossroads and the trail we had followed at the time of the assault.

"Bien, mi comprehender," said Camango at last, "mis sabe; you no go good. Yo go malo; mi showa you by-en-by; bien me know de pelace."

Camango's assurances gave me new hope. By noontime we had reached the main road, but not at the place where Ned and I had entered it. I explained this to Camango.

"Si, mi sabe; other way," he explained, motioning easterly, "no good data way," indicating westerly, "bien, sabe?" I nodded acquiescence. I began to believe that Camango knew what he was about.

Shortly after we spied in the low brush near the

main road a brooklet and we stopped to have luncheon and to rest and water our horses. The mountains now loomed high around us and the gigantic massiveness of the Chimborazo seemed to fill the very air with awe. We did not tarry long and were soon in our saddles again.

As we proceeded along we began to ascend the foothills. The scene about us became gorgeous in its beauty. The rugged, high mountains, the deep cañons and running rivulets in the ravines below, the glare of the western sun and the shadows cast by mountain peaks and gorge, all tended to create a picture which, I believe, would be impossible of human reproduction. By three o'clock we were in a maze of kaleidoscopic mountain scenery that almost made my head reel. Our path, which was now barely perceptible in the rock, was at times so narrow that we had to proceed in single file.

At about four o'clock we espied some buildings on a small plateau in the hollow of a mountain pass. A narrow rivulet was coursing its way nearby only to lose itself in the distant gulches below.

"There we are," I cried in my excitement.

"Easy now, Jim," warned Hirsch. "We had better be on our guard. Those chaps over there do not expect us and I am not at all sure of the sort of reception they are likely to have in store for us."

"That's so," I admitted, laughing nervously.

We moved along more cautiously now, but we could not avoid the clug-clug of our horses' hoofs on the rocky path. Gradually the outline of the building became more definite and I could make out that there were three of them, all one-story buildings.

"By George, Hirsch," I ejaculated as I recognized the familiar construction of one of the buildings. "By George, they've got a smelter. That building alongside of the brook is a smelter; wonder where they get their coal?"

"Co-al," observed Camango, who had evidently overheard me, "yo sabe, Senor, et is some lattle bit co-al he-ar; maybe 'nough for to make smelt."

"I wouldn't be surprised if that was so," I replied. "Conditions around about here favor the possibility of coal deposits."

We were now making directly for the mine property; a stone fence and iron gate barred our way.

"Adonde ser via?" suddenly demanded a sharp, ringing voice out of space, which echoed and re-echoed and lost itself amid the mountain tops.

"Adonde ser via? No pasares aqui," it bellowed again menacingly, as we simultaneously drew rein and let our gaze wander in search of the possessor of the voice. And presently we spied him, or rather his head and hands, which were protruding out of one of the windows of the building nearest the gate. The barrel of a large-sized revolver, held in each hand, which was leveled directly at us, shone and glistened in the sunlight.

"I'll answer," I whispered to Hirsch, making my way to the front. "Do you speak English?"

"Well, what do you want?"

"Is this the mine of the 'Chimborazo Gold Mining and Metals Company'?"

"You tell me your business first, young fella."

"I am a mining engineer. I represent a large shareholder in the 'Chimborazo Gold Mining and

Metals Company,' and am here to examine the properties of the company."

"How am I to know that you are not a band of thieves?"

This was a stinger. In my impetuousness and hurry I had not taken a single letter of introduction with me to show who I was.

"Well," he threatened, "you fellas turn about face and forward march quick time or I'll shoot."

"You shoot, if you dare," I challenged. "I told you who I am, and this gentleman," I said, pointing to Hirsch, "is my companion and the other two our guides. People at Guayaquil and Guaranda know that we are on our way here. If you injure a hair of our heads you will have to answer to the United States as well as to the Ecuadorian governments."

This gave him something to think about, and he remained in the position he was in for a few moments.

"Well," he said, "I will send a man to the gate; you hand him your escopetas and your machettes and I will let you in."

"What do you say, Hirsch?" I inquired in a whisper.

"If you want to see the place, Jim," he replied, "there is no help for it."

"All right," I called to the man at the window, "send down your man."

A native came to the gate. We rode up, dismounted and handed him our weapons. After the man had disappeared with them the man at the window came to the gate and admitted us.

He was a tall, bewhiskered man of about fifty,

dressed like a village blacksmith. We led our horses to a shed in the courtyard where we left them in charge of Camango and Strella while Hirsch and I followed our unwilling host into a sort of a crude office in the building at the gate.

"What is it you want?" he demanded again.

"As I have already told you," I said, "I am a mining enginer and have been sent out here by a stockholder of this company to make an examination of the mine."

"Well, young man," he said, with decision, "you can't make no examination of this mine, so far as I know."

"Why not?"

"Because you can't; that's all."

"Are you the superintendent here?"

He eyed me a moment or two before answering. "No," he said at last, as if weighing every word he said, "I am not the boss here. I only look after the place in his absence."

"What is your name, sir?" inquired Hirsch, who had been watching the man intently all the time as though unable to take his eyes off of him.

"My name. Oh, my name is all right; John Brown is my name," and he clicked with his throat. I could not make out if it was a swallow or a laugh.

"Oh," said Hirsch, in a voice of disappointment or relief, I could not tell which, as he tore his eyes away from Mr. Brown and made for the door.

"Oh, ha," I exclaimed, "you are the man who found the mine?"

"Which way did you come?" he inquired placidly instead of answering my query after a moment or

two of hesitation.

"By boat."

"Way of Babahoya?"

"Yes."

"Well, there is nothing further, so far as I can see. If you will lead your horses out of the gate I will hand back your weapons."

"What? Why, we are not going back to-night."

"No! Why?"

"Well, our horses are tired and we are all played out. We have been riding all day."

"Oh, I see. Well, I am sorry; it is but poor quarters you will have here for the night."

"Oh, any place will do; we cannot travel again to-night.

"Well, well, all right," he said. With that he left the office and I joined Hirsch.

We had some food and fodder along—that is Hirsch had—for such an emergency, so procuring water from the little brooklet we had our evening repast and made our animals comfortable.

After supper Hirsch and I took a stroll to sort of look around. Hirsch seemed to be more than unusually preoccupied and dreamy and his answers to anything I said were in monosyllables. I, of course, kept my eyes open all the time, but as it was getting dark I did not have any chance, as yet, to see where the mine was, or if it was being worked. I hoped to be able to get a glimpse of it before we left in the morning.

Of the three buildings in the courtyard, one was apparently a smelter, one a store house and the last, the building near the gate where the office was lo-

cated, was seemingly used, in part, for living purposes. We saw several men moving about who looked like natives, but they seemed to pay no attention to us. As we passed the building that I suspected of being a smelter I espied large quantities of coal ashes and clinkers strewn down hill.

"Hirsch," I whispered, tugging at him, "see those ashes? That building is the smelter, sure enough."

"I could see that a mile off," he whispered in return. "Don't let on that you are squinting around any more than you can help, or we are likely to be turned loose before the night is over, if nothing worse happens."

"He won't bother us any, I guess," I replied; "my threat about the United States and Ecuadorian Governments has undoubtedly spiked his guns all right, though I confess he is likely to give us little or no chance to examine the mine."

"No, it does not look as if he would."

"That will be too bad," said I, disappointedly. "I must get a chance somehow to see what they have here before we get away."

"Yes."

"I'll wait till morning and have another talk with Mr. Brown. Perhaps I can persuade him to let me see the mine."

"Yes, perhaps he will."

"Oh, Hirsch, what in heaven is the matter with you? You aren't frightened, are you?"

"Frightened," he echoed, looking at me empty-eyed. "No, I am not frightened. I believe I am tired; let us join the men and take some rest."

"All right," I agreed. "Suppose I go and strike

Mr. Brown for more comfortable quarters."

"Yes, do."

I walked over to the office and found Mr. Brown outside the door. I could see that he eyed me with suspicion as I approached.

"Well, what is it you want now?" he growled before I reached him or had a chance to state the purpose of my mission.

"Perhaps you could oblige us with some indoor quarters for the night."

He contemplated me thoughtfully for a few minutes, frowning under his bushy eyebrows before replying.

"You can use this place, here, if you want to," he rasped at last, indicating with a side motion of his head the office floor.

I thanked him and went back to Hirsch.

"Well," I told Hirsch, "it's an improvement on rock, anyway, so let's be thankful for small mercies."

Rejoining our men, we gathered our saddles, saddlebags and paltas and carried them over to the office. And although it was no later than eight o'clock we retired for the night. I had spent an amazing twenty-four hours with but little rest and hard travel and fell asleep almost immediately.

Sometime afterwards—how soon after I cannot say—I was awakened by a commotion on the outside. I sat up listening; yes, sure enough, there was some sort of a row going on. I looked as best I could in the darkness to where I had last seen Hirsch and the men but they were gone. I heard the sound of several shots fired in quick succession

and shuffling and running feet. I jumped up and ran to the door. Through the darkness I could see several persons running in various directions and I heard more firing.

As I cleared the threshold I beheld Brown fencing with an unknown adversary, using musket butt ends for weapons. Another figure stealthily approaching seized Brown from behind, pinning his arms down close to his sides and bearing him to the ground. As I rushed forward to Brown's assistance his first antagonist raised his musket with a sledge-hammer swing to brain him, as I thought, when out of the darkness Hirsch's form appeared. In his hands he held aloft a long and heavy cudgel which he brought down with crushing force upon the forearms of the man with the descending musket. With a shriek of pain that worthly let his musket drop to the ground, but not before it had struck Brown a glancing blow on the head.

Brown reeled and fell as his second antagonist let go of him to join his companion in an impromptu race for the stone wall. It all happened so quickly that as I came in on the run I was only in time to pick a fallen musket up off the ground and join Hirsch in the chase. On the way Camango and Strella joined us.

"What's all this about?" I demanded, breathlessly, of Hirsch, as we were now following up several figures that were quickly disappearing over the wall.

"The mine has been attacked by outsiders," explained Hirsch. "I was unable to fall asleep and heard the rumpus. I came out and offered our assistance to Brown, but he was undecided whether to

trust us. I guess he wasn't at all sure but what we might be confederates of the attacking party. However, when I saw the odds were against him I rushed in and it now looks as if we have beaten them off."

We could see in the distance Brown's men putting the finishing touches to the retreating invaders when I bethought me of Brown.

"Let us hurry back to Brown," I said. "I fear he is seriously wounded, if not killed; that butt-end struck him on the head."

"It was a glancing blow," said Hirsch. "I don't think it is serious, but we had better attend to him, anyway, to make sure."

Leaving Camango and Strella to give such further assistance to Brown's men as was necessary, we retraced our steps and found Brown still lying on the ground, unconscious and breathing heavily.

Hirsch knelt down and examined him carefully.

"Nothing very serious that I can see," he announced, rising; "except for the bruise alongside of his head and face, which must have been caused by the blow, I can see nothing out of the way; that blow undoubtedly stunned him."

"What had we better do?"

"Carry him into the office; I have some spirits which may revive him."

Suiting action to word, we took hold of him between us—he wasn't a heavy man for his size at that—and carried him to the office in a jiffy. We laid him on some blankets and Hirsch produced a small flask from a saddlebag. He screwed off the top, and, forcing an opening between the man's teeth, he poured some of the contents down his throat and

withdrew the bottle. The result was magic; Brown gargled, choked and spluttered for a moment, swallowed once or twice, opened his eyes and struggled with our assistance to a sitting position. He looked about him, blinking dazedly. The gray of the early dawn was breaking and cast a ghostlike shadow upon his features.

"Feel better?" I inquired when again for some unknown reason Hirsch rose abruptly and left us.

"Yes," said Brown. "I feel better. What's happened? Oh, yes, I remember; are the bandits still here?"

"No, I don't think they are; they have been driven off."

He scrutinized me thoughtfully for some time.

"I thought at first you were of their party," he said, presently.

"I hope you feel satisfied to the contrary now," I replied. "It was pretty lucky for you that we happened to be here."

"Yes," he said, nodding, "yes, that is very true and yet if it wasn't for one thing I don't know but what it would have been just as well if I'd been killed."

"Oh, come on," I said, encouragingly, "that isn't the way to talk."

He shook his head despondingly.

"Nothing to live for—nothing."

"Have you no friends, no family?"

He gazed up at me with that forlorn, beseeching look which one occasionally sees in the eyes of children or in that of dumb animals seeking human sympathy.

"Where are you from, did you say?" he inquired instead of answering my question.

"Boston."

"Boston—Boston did you say?" he demanded as though surprised.

"Yes, Boston; why, what's the matter?"

"Nothing—nothing; what did you say your name was?"

"Morgan—James Morgan."

He shook his head disappointedly. "No," he said, "no, he wouldn't know."

"Know what?"

"Nothing—nothing. You better go home, young fella, go home," he urged. "This is no place for you."

"I must examine this mine before I go."

"Owners' orders are strictly against it," he said, again shaking his head. "There have been several attacks recently on this property. We've applied for military guards and they are to be here this morning."

"But I am here to get the information if this mine is good, bad or indifferent; I can't go back without it."

"But why can't the stockholders that you represent get all this information at the company's offices?"

"That's just it," I rejoined. "The officers of the company say, as you probably know, that the mine has given out and that among other things they need more money to do further prospecting at the mine. We want to find out by an examination of the property if their claims and demands are justified."

Mr. Brown stared at me without uttering a word in reply. It struck me that he was astonished at what I said.

"Don't you know that they have levied a two dollar assessment on each outstanding share of the company's stock?" I asked.

If anything, his stare hardened, I thought; his eyes closed for a moment, and when he opened them again he said in a low, emphatic tone of voice, "Go back, go back, you can't do any good by staying here. If I live," he continued, "I'll be in Boston within three or four weeks and I'll see that things are straightened out; look me up at the Metropole."

To this I demurred.

"No use—no use," he insisted. "I owe you and your friend a good turn, and I'll do it. But it can't be done here; wait till I come to Boston."

Brown now got to his feet and dragged himself outside. I followed. The radiance of the rising sun was just appearing between the gorges, but excepting for the shrieks of some circling birds near the mountain peaks everything was as quiet as if nothing had happened. I found Hirsch and our men at the pony shed.

"How is the old chap?" inquired Hirsch, solicitously.

"All right now," I replied, "he's up and about." I then related my conversation with him and of Brown's expectation of military aid that morning.

"Good," he said, "I am glad of that. There is no doubt that the bandits about here have got wind that there's gold to be found here, and they are bound to get it; supported by military aid it may

be all right; otherwise I think they would have got the old fellow sooner or later."

"I think you are right," I agreed. "When had we better start?"

"The sooner the better if you are through," he replied. "There is no fodder to be got about here and the animals must be fed if they are to carry us."

"All right; then we start as soon as we have had breakfast."

"Good."

With that we got busy preparing our morning meal. This did not take very long, nor did the disposition of it. Meantime the men had tended to the horses and by eight o'clock we were ready to make the start.

Hirsch and I looked up Brown to bid him good-bye. We found him superintending the barbwiring of the stone wall which surrounded the mine. Except for the abrasion on his face he was apparently none the worse for the night's adventure.

"Do you want us to stay until military aid comes?" inquired Hirsch.

"No," answered Brown, "they made their last attempt last night; they got wind somehow that the guards were expected to-day."

"I shall expect to see you in Boston within a month, then," I reminded Brown as we shook hands.

"Yes," he affirmed, nodding, "yes, if nothing unforeseen happens, I will be in Boston in three to four weeks. Look me up at the Metropole at the end of that time."

With that our little cavalcade started. As we were descending the rocky trail I looked back and

there, framed in the open window where I first saw him, was the grizzly countenance of John Brown. In the strong morning sun which was beating down upon and illuminating his features I could see him following us with his gaze. I waved my hand to him in a last farewell and he returned the salutation.

"A peculiar character, that John Brown," I remarked, turning to Hirsch. "I feel kind of sorry for him, don't you?"

But Hirsch was in the doldrums again. I doubt if he heard me; at any rate, he vouchsafed no reply to my observation.

On the morning of June sixth we sailed from Babahoya for Guayaquil, where we arrived on the evening of the same day. Here Hirsch paid off his men while I presented each with a substantial gratuity. To my great surprise and delight I found Ned at the Hotel Aleman. He had just returned from Quito, where, luckily for him, he was well known to many of the government officials, as he had assisted in putting them into power at the last revolution. Nevertheless it had taken a great deal of time to obtain the required results. Ultimately he was released and returned to Guayaquil. He was in a great quandary, he said, what to do about me when to his great relief I popped upon the scene safe and sound.

It was old Housenfus though who showed the greatest delight at my advent. "Ach mein lieber," he kept on repeating. "I be awful very much glad to see you wieder, Misder Morgan, sabe?"

The old fellow had apparently been greatly trou-

bled by Ned's story of our separation, and was evidently genuinely overjoyed on my safe return. Within fifteen minutes of my setting foot in the Hotel Aleman, Herr Housenfus had handed me the funds I had left with him for safe keeping. He was certainly a very dependable host, and we parted the best of friends.

After relating my experiences to Ned and straightening everything out with him, Hirsch and I sailed for Panama on the eighth day of June, having remained in Guayaquil but a day and a half. We arrived at Panama on the thirteenth and crossed the Isthmus by rail to Colon the following day. Here we engaged passage on the S. S. Admiral Pinto, which was to sail for New York on the seventeenth of June.

Before going aboard I cabled home, hoping to give them all, particularly my sweetheart, Jean, a pleasant surprise of my home coming. After the eventful and exciting experiences in Ecuador I felt elated at the prospect. I had no reason to doubt but what it was to be the last lap of my journey.

PART III

Ruth's Story

CHAPTER XIII

Gathering Clouds

"But the bird may fall from the bough of youth,
And song be turned to moan,
And love's storm cloud be the shadows of hate,
When the tempest waves of a troubled state
Are beating against a throne."—Rossetti.

FATHER did not tell any of us what his visit with Jim to Mr. Courtney's office was about; I knew, of course, that he was in some sort of trouble, Mr. DiSilvera's warning had prepared me for that, but I did not know the nature or cause of the trouble, or what it might mean to us. We never had the habit of inquiring into father's business affairs. I did on this occasion try real hard to make him tell me what it was all about, nevertheless father was very much disinclined to do so, and passed it off with a wave of the hand and with an "oh, it's nothing—nothing at all." Nor was Jim more communicative than father. We hadn't the least idea of father's venture in the stock of the Chimborazo Mining Company, or that Jim was to go to Ecuador or anything like that; nevertheless I still felt disturbed after father's return from Mr. Courtney's office. Two or three days later Jim, who had apparently gone forth in the morning on his usual hunt

for something to do, returned home in the evening greatly elated. "Great news, Sis," he hailed joyfully as soon as he caught sight of me, "I've hooked it at last and it looks good to me, too."

"Hooked what, Jim?" I questioned, looking at him in surprise; "what are you talking about?"

"Why, a job, you good old scout," he laughed, happily, as he caught me to him in a bear-like hug, "a real live job, and where do you suppose I am to go? Guess."

"Where?" I inquired, as I pushed him from me and held him at arms' length, delighted with his happiness, and yet somehow quailing inwardly, "where are you to go, Jim?"

"Come on and guess."

"New York?"

"No, try again," he laughed.

I shook my head. "No, I can't guess—tell me, dear."

"Panama."

"Panama!"

My face fell, my feet felt as though they would give way under me—so great was my surprise. "But, Jim, dear, what an awful distance," I cried. "What do you want to do it for? Why—why don't you wait a little while longer and get something around here?"

"No," he replied, shaking his head, "no, this is too good a chance to lose, and I've got to be up and doing something. You don't expect me to be a baby all my life, do you, Ruth?" he demanded with some heat.

Well, no, we did not expect him to remain a baby,

of course, but it was real hard to think of his going with equanimity. Mother and Minnie seemed to be more frightened and take it more to heart than I when they heard the news. Father said it was all right and would do the boy good. It was different with us girls and mother. Jim had never been away from home very much, and Panama sounded so very far away.

Jim began preparations for his journey at once, saying that he was expected to start without delay, whilst we looked on in a sort of a daze, not knowing what to say. Eventually, however, seeing that go he must, and not wanting to make him feel badly by our behavior, we entered into the spirit of the thing and were outwardly happy despite our misgivings.

After Jim's departure we felt his absence very keenly, although we tried hard to hide our feelings from each other. As for myself, I had never before experienced such depression of spirits and such loneliness as I did on the days immediately following his going away. I felt as if a half of my being had left me. I was forever imagining all sorts of gruesome things, and I became so nervous that if the door bell or telephone rang, or if any one rapped or spoke abruptly, my heart would jump and I would be filled with mortal fear.

We two, you see—Jim and I—had been brought up together and we had been playmates all our lives —had attended the same school; were exhibited and made much of as twins and were in a way almost inseparable until Jim went to college. Even then he was at home almost all the time. This was our

first real parting, and the distance of the journey, I think, more than anything else, was what unnerved me.

When Jim's letter announcing his safe arrival at Panama reached us I felt much relieved. For a time I felt amused with the thought of my recent fear and what a silly goose I had been to have worried so much. I answered Jim's letter immediately and begged him to take good care of himself, and to be sure and write us every day, and if that wasn't possible, to do so as often as he could, even if it was only a word or two to let us know that he was safe and sound. But no further word came from Jim—it was as if the earth had swallowed him. When the first week passed without a single line from him I wrote him an urgent letter again, begging him to be more liberal with his missives. At the end of the second week our home became a very sorrowful place. Notwithstanding my own misgivings I was obliged to put on a brave front and smiling face in order to quiet the fears of mother and Minnie. Father kept us hopeful with his assurances that all was well with Jim, and that we would surely hear from him before long. Then my first letter to Jim came back unopened with the single word "Gone" marked upon it. "Father," I cried, "oh father, Jim is gone, Jim is gone," and mother and Minnie wept as if Jim was dead. But father would not listen and scolded us instead and called us silly, and said Jim must be away at his work on some mine and would write on his return to Panama. This reassured us again for a time, and I urged father to look up Jim's employers and make inquiry. Unfor-

tunately, however, father said he had forgotten the name of the firm.

And so something like four weeks passed. To cap the climax, father came home one evening more depressed than usual, even for those days, and, saying he had something very important to tell me, he called me into the library. Poor old dad, he certainly looked the picture of misery that evening, and his story was as heartbreaking as his looks.

Business had not been very good with him for some time, he said. Jim's education, an unfortunate business venture and increased financial requirement had so depleted his ready cash that he had been obliged some time back to place a mortgage upon our home. In addition to that he had discounted some of his paper at the Liberal Loan & Trust Company, where he kept his account. That one of his notes for quite a large sum was due in a few days, and the bank had informed him that very morning that it would not renew this loan, and that he had no possible prospects of meeting it.

The President of the bank, whom father saw personally, suggested that if father would go and see Mr. DiSilvera, who was one of the bank's directors and chairman of its committee on loans, that it was possible Mr. DiSilvera might arrange an extension of the loan for him.

Father said that he did call on Mr. DiSilvera, and that the latter had received him kindly, but that when he broached the subject of the loan to him, Mr. DiSilvera had laughingly replied that perhaps if I would ask for the accommodation it could probably be arranged.

Father said that he was greatly perplexed by the suggestion, as he couldn't see what I had to do with it, anyway. After he had left Mr. DiSilvera's office he had been on the point several times of returning to ask for an explanation, but had decided to speak to me first and see if I could throw any light on the subject.

I sat there for several moments at a loss what to say to father. Instinctively I surmised Mr. DiSilvera's purpose, but I did not quite understand how a man who sought a woman's love could stoop to such a low venture.

"How much are you in trouble, dear?" I asked father, just to say something. Then, grasping the meaning of the situation, "what will happen if you don't pay?"

"Happen," he exclaimed, sort of frightened, "why, child, if I don't pay that note or get a renewal it means bankruptcy."

"Bankruptcy?" I had heard the word before. I knew in a way what it meant—ruin, disgrace; poor mother, poor Minnie. I felt stunned by the calamity. But then there was still Mr. DiSilvera as a last hope. I must have time to think this over—to decide what to do.

"Don't worry, dear," I said to father, rising, "don't worry—I will see what can be done in the morning—I will try and find out what it all means and let you know. Perhaps we'll still find a way out of it—anyway, let's hope we will."

I retired for the night in no happy frame of mind. I need hardly say that I suspected it was Mr. DiSilvera's purpose to place me under obligations to

him; to force me for father's sake to receive his attentions.

It was generally known that although Mr. DiSilvera was ostensibly only a director of the Liberal Loan & Trust, nevertheless he was in reality the real power in the bank—its financial dictator. The more I thought of what father told me the more I was inclined to believe that Mr. DiSilvera had schemed all this to embarrass father so as to force me to be his supplicant. What was I going to do about it? I tossed and tossed about and grew nervous with the thought. Would I go and see him, I asked myself over and over again, and then eventually decided to leave that question open till morning.

What troubled me most was whether I cared or not for Mr. DiSilvera—if I could ever come to like him—to love him in the way he wanted me to. His characteristics and mannerisms—the many little peculiarities that a girl learns to observe in a man who pays her attention and learns to like or dislike in him, all recurred to me and stood out vividly in the quiet darkness of my room and paraded their effects and defects so that I could not escape them, no matter whichever way I turned or tossed.

"No—no—no," I moaned over and over again. I can't do it, I can't do it; I don't like him—I can never like him. I could never bring myself to suffer the touch of his lips on mine—to undergo the pressure of his embrace. The very thought was repulsive, and sent cold shivers all over me.

I had had my own dreams on that score—on the sort of man I would like to love and be loved by.

Like most girls, I took flight at times into fancy's realm where I built castles in the air and enshrined them with a picture of my Prince Charming, only to find when I fluttered to earth again that Prince and castle alike were of the substance of the air within which I had built them.

There were, of course, some fine young fellows among those that I knew, and in the set that I mixed —good-looking boys, many of them, and very taking in their ways. But most of them were so unsettled and fickle that they reminded me of nothing so much as a bevy of bees that fly about in the flower gardens, humming and buzzing and hovering over each flower, kissing the sweet petals of such as may take their fancy, regardless of the sting they may inflict and the pain they leave behind. Many of them, in fact, oblivious or indifferent to it; carrying the honey they gathered to some distant hive, some day to be enjoyed by other lips.

In my fancy I would conjure up the picture of my ideal. For one thing he must be constant—one whose devotion would not change with the approach of every new butterfly; who would not be distracted by a glimpse of every pretty face that comes to view; whose words of love would be divine, spoken for me alone; to enchant, ennoble and sweeten our lives—his and mine. I endowed my picture with a strong, manly, good-looking face, dark complexioned and with penetrating eyes that could discern love to mate with his—eyes that could pierce to the depths of my heart, to be held hostage for the love that I should give him. I formed his brow in an intellectual mold, bespeaking intelligence and knowledge,

love of music, and art, and children—I love children. I gave him a straight nose and strong chin, that he may be a leader among his fellows and a good, wholesome mouth. I endowed him with strong, muscular arms to wage the battle of life and to love and shield me.

"Oh, love," I cried in the ecstasy of my visionary delight, stretching forth my arms into the darkness. "Oh, love, come to me, I am waiting for you—only you, I want no one else," and I turned on my pillow, buried my face in my arms and wept myself to sleep.

I fear that in comparing Mr. DiSilvera with the picture of my imagination I was not entirely fair to the former, for it only accentuated his shortcomings. But what was I to do? I wanted my ideal man, or none at all; and even if I was a silly little idiot in wanting him I couldn't help it, could I?

The morning following I was as undecided about going to see Mr. DiSilvera as I was the evening previous. After breakfast I strolled over to the park, where I took a long, brisk walk. By that time I had decided to venture into the lion's den and took the trolley to town.

I reached Mr. DiSilvera's office at about ten o'clock, and on sending in my name, I was immediately ushered into his private office.

He was alone, and it seemed to me that his olive-skinned features were more than usually pale. He rose to shake hands as I entered, and placed a chair for me near his desk, where I sat down.

The room was large and square, very tastily finished in mahogany, with furniture to match. After

a few polite words concerning my health and the weather, I broached the subject of my visit and told him as to how I would appreciate very much any kindness he may show father in his present crisis.

"As I tried to explain to you the other evening, Ruth," he said, after thoughtfully drumming the desk, "I fear that your father is in serious business difficulties, and the bank has very wisely, I think, decided not to renew his loan. I doubt if it would do him any good even if it did, as I believe your father to be beyond temporary relief of that kind."

"Oh, no, I hope that isn't so," I exclaimed, rather frightened. "Father usually does real good business, and is well established. This season has, however, been an unusually poor one for him, but if he can carry over to the fall he will be all right, and no one will be the worse for it."

Mr. DiSilvera indicated his lack of agreement with what I said by shaking his head.

"Furthermore," I urged, "my brother Jim has recently accepted a position at Panama, and although we have not heard from him lately, I am quite sure when he hears of father's difficulties he will send what money he can."

"Do you know where your brother is now?" demanded Mr. DiSilvera, fixing me with his eyes.

"At Panama, of course; where else should he be?"

"Well, let me tell you, then, he is not at Panama," said Mr. DiSilvera, a sarcastic smile distorting his features.

I jumped to my feet.

"Sit down, Ruth, don't get excited and listen to

me," he commanded.

I sat down again.

"Your brother Jim has gone to Ecuador on a wild goose chase for your father—to locate a gold mine in which your father holds some shares. The mine is a failure and will never amount to anything, but your father, advised by a fool lawyer who is looking for a big fee, has sent your brother to examine that mine."

"How do you know that?"

"As to the mine I hold some shares in the same company. As to the rest, I know that the lawyer has instituted proceedings against the Company in your father's name and we have learned that your brother sailed from Panama for Ecuador."

"Well, but suppose Jim finds the mine all right —perhaps that will save us."

"The mine is no good, take it from me, and your brother has disappeared—he never reached the mine, although he was due there some time ago."

"Oh," I cried, rising again and almost fainting from fright. "Oh, I must go and see father, something must be done at once."

"Listen to me, Ruth, dear," he said, also rising, seizing my arm as if to detain me, "your brother will show up sooner or later if he's alive, but your father's affairs are pressing, and must be settled within a day or two. A renewal of the loan will not help him; he needs money—the last he had he gave to your brother to make this foolish trip. No one will discount your father's paper any longer; the mercantile agencies have got the scent and have warned their subscribers. I am the only one that

can help your father in his present difficulties. I am willing to do it, Ruth, if you will say the word —if you will say you will be my wife."

"No, no," I cried, trying to get away from him, "don't ask me now. I must go and see father at once."

"Ruth, dear," he hissed with a vehemence I had never heard him use before, "Ruth, you must promise to be my wife—I want you—I must have you—I can't be without you; promise me now."

"Let go of my arm, Mr. DiSilvera," I said, sharply, more frightened than ever now, and not liking the look in his eyes nor the violence of his manner, "I must go home at once."

Suddenly I felt myself clasped in his arms as he drew me to him with the strength of a maniac. I felt his passionate kisses on my face, eyes, lips and neck, as I struggled and rained blows upon his face and head with my clenched fists.

"Let go of me," I cried in gasps, struggling desperately, "let go of me or I'll scream and bring the whole office down. How dare you, sir."

A rap sounded on the inner door. Tap, tap, tap, it came again. He released me and stood gasping, wild-eyed, fingering his collar and tie which had become disarranged in the struggle. I gave one quick, haunted look about me and spied a door leading to the outer corridor. Quick as a flash I had it open and I was out in the corridor just as I heard the inner door of the office open. My cheeks were aflame and I fairly bristled with anger. I felt as though everybody was staring at me. I hurried along blindly—I felt weak-kneed as though my feet were

about to give way under me. I found my handkerchief and wiped my face and lips. His touch had been repulsive, vile; I felt that I could not go home in the state I was in. I wondered where I should go or what I should do when I bethought me of Jean. I entered the subway as in a trance, and still very much dazed. Soon I found myself ringing the Miller's door bell, and then in their spacious reception hall, where Jean, dear Jean, stood gazing at me for the fraction of a second with open mouth and terror-stricken eyes.

"Oh, Ruth, Ruth," she cried, "what's happened to Jim? Oh, what's happened?"

"I don't know, I don't know," I moaned, as I sank into a chair, breaking down completely and weeping bitterly, and dear Jean sat down beside me, took me in her arms and wept with me for consolation.

CHAPTER XIV

A Friend in Need

"O blessed friend, O blissful thought
With happiest consolation fraught,
Trust thee I may, I will, I ought;
To doubt were sin:
Then let whatever storms arise,
Their Ruler sits above the Skies,
And lifting up to Him mine eyes,
'Tis calm within."—Tupper.

THE paroxysm over, I felt much relieved.

After a while I told Jean about all there was to tell, excepting, of course, Mr. DiSilvera's cowardly behavior.

Jean was as much distressed as we were concerning Jim. We had no doubt after talking matters over that Mr. DiSilvera's version of Jim's mission was a correct one. It explained, in a way, father's willingness to let Jim go so far from home and his unexplained indifference to Jim's silence. Father knew all the time, while we were kept in ignorance. But what troubled me most was the uncertainty of Jim's whereabouts since he left Panama. Mr. DiSilvera was apparently sure that Jim hadn't reached his destination. And the fact that we hadn't heard from him since his first letter dated at Panama was a

sure sign that something terrible happened.

"Do you know what I am going to do?" I told Jean, the thought suddenly coming to me. "I am going to go and look for Jim. If anything has happened to him we are going to find out about it. This suspense is going to kill me if I don't. I am going to make father go with me. He sent Jim away and now he has got to help find him."

"Oh Ruth," exclaimed Jean in ecstasy, clasping and unclasping her hands, "you're a darling. Oh isn't that grand; you're just the kind of a sister I'd love to have if I was a boy. But do you think, dear, that your father will let you go?" she asked doubtfully. "Do you think he will consent to undertake such a long journey?"

"Yes I do," I emphatically replied. "I think he will do it if his business affairs can be arranged. Summer is a slack season for him and there isn't much doing just now anyway. But, oh, Jean dear," I cried despondently, "we can do nothing, nothing at all, unless I can find some one to help father straighten out his business difficulties—to carry him over until the fall. And I don't know whom to appeal to, or what to do."

"You wait, dear," consoled Jean, "you wait till my father comes home and we'll see what can be done. Father is a darling and thinks a great deal of you and Jim and—and everybody and I think he is going to help. You just wait and see." And with that Jean got busy putting away my hat and gloves. "And oh, Ruthie, dear," she exclaimed, suddenly coming over to where I sat and putting her arms about me, "I do wish I could go with you. Do you

think father would let me go if I asked him?"

"Mr. Miller, Jean?"

She nodded her reply.

"No, I don't think he will, dear," I said, shaking my head. "I should love to have you, but I don't think he will let you go."

I telephoned home and told mother not to expect me until after dinner.

Presently Mrs. Miller joined us and we spent the afternoon speculating on the probable cause of Jim's silence and the advisability of venturing south to find him. I was tingling with anticipation and hope. But Mrs. Miller doubted the wisdom of it and thought it was a very rash undertaking. Nevertheless, I was very determined and argued that unless we really did something urgent—to go looking for him the strain would probably kill mother who was already pining away on account of his silence. Finally, even Mrs. Miller agreed that perhaps it was the best thing to do after all.

It was nearly six o'clock when Mr. Miller arrived home. He was delighted to see me and wanted to know, first thing, how Jim was getting on in his new position and when we had last heard from him. I answered as best I could, evading for the time being a discussion of that which was so near to my heart.

Later in the evening when we were all gathered in the parlor, Jean seated herself on the arm of her father's chair and putting her arms caressingly about Mr. Miller gradually related to him all our troubles; Jim's disappearance; the bank's refusal to renew father's loan and Mr. DiSilvera's declining to help after having sent for me, unless I consented to marry

him.

"I am glad Ruth refused to marry Mr. DiSilvera, aren't you, daddy?" she inquired, gently smoothing down the hair on her father's head. "I think he is too mean for anything."

"Mean!" exclaimed Mr. Miller with indignation. "That feller is a shark. I haf no use for him at all. I think Ruth was a smart girl to refuse him. I am going to tell him what I think of him as soon as I see him, and as for his bank, I got an account mit 'em which I am going to widraw first thing."

"How much does your papa owe these fellers, eh?" he inquired, turning to me.

I told him that I didn't know.

"Well—well, it don't matter much anyway," he said kindly. "You tell your papa to come an' see me to-morrow and I'll fix him up all right. You just tell him he needn't worry no more. I'll see him through all right. That bank, it will cost him dear."

My heart was filled to overflowing by Mr. Miller's kindness and I actually brushed Jean aside as I threw my arms about him and hugged and kissed him while tears of joy which I could not restrain ran down my cheeks.

"Now, now, you stop that, you silly child," scolded Mr. Miller, patting me kindly at the same time. "Go away, go away," he laughed, pushing me from him, "you have broken my cigar, you foolish girl. What more do you want? You make such a fuss as if it was something. What's a man got a friend for if he ain't going to help him any? As for your brother Jim," he continued more somberly, "I don't know maybe you could do it mit your lawyer or mit

the consuls, what you call 'em, what they have out there, or maybe not. I don't know. But if you want to go mit your father to look for him, well, you go. Maybe you're right. And about the money don't you worry."

"Pa," exclaimed Jean, hugging him in turn, "let me go with Ruth, will you, popsy?"

"Go where?"

"To look for Jim, of course. Where else do you suppose?"

"What!" cried Mr. Miller, "to go to look;—nothing doing, child; what's the matter mit you anyway? The idea. I have only one little girl and she is going to stay right here. Do you understand me, Jean? Now you must be good," he warned, "if you want me to help."

Jean pouted and wistfully fingered Mr. Miller's hair again, but she didn't insist, and I was glad that she didn't, for I feared that she might spoil everything by so doing.

The rest of the evening was spent very pleasantly and presently I went home.

I found father waiting for me. I told him all about my visit to Mr. DiSilvera's office, but only to the extent of saying that I had decided not to put ourselves under obligations to him and so had declined his assistance. Father looked crestfallen, but I wouldn't have him so—poor, dear old dad. I knew his heart was breaking and I was not going to have him suffer any more than I could help. So I explained to him my visit to the Millers and how kind Mr. Miller had been, and how he was going to see him through his troubles safely.

I then unfolded my plan to go South in an endeavor to find Jim. Father demurred at first—there was Minnie's wedding to be considered and his business affairs. But I made it plain that no wedding would or could take place until we knew what had become of Jim.

Finally father consented and mother and Minnie agreed that it was the best thing to do under the circumstances, as the uncertainty was terrible.

Mr. Courtney was seen, but he could throw no light on the subject. He cabled to Panama, but without obtaining any satisfactory results.

Mr. Miller was as good as his word, in fact, he was kindness personified, and father's financial troubles were all satisfactorily adjusted.

I immediately set about making preparations. We closed the house altogether and had mother and Minnie accompany us to New York, where they remained near Mr. Youngerman until our return.

Minnie's wedding set for June fifteenth was postponed. We had written to Mr. Youngerman beforehand and told him of our trouble, and like the darling that he is, he not only offered to be of whatever assistance he could and to look after mother and Minnie, but consoled and encouraged us in every way possible.

On the sixteenth day of June father and I sailed on the steamer Admiral Paul from New York for Colon, the eastern terminus of the Isthmus. After the first twenty-four hours at sea I felt somewhat rested and less nervous. I spent most of my time lolling about the ship's deck in a large canvased back steamer chair that we had brought with us, or prom-

enading the deck, dreamily musing upon all that had happened and subconsciously weaving pictures of our coming meeting with Jim. The mental and bodily pain from which I suffered the past few weeks and the fear for Jim's safety had now disappeared. I felt more buoyant and more optimistic for the successful result of our journey.

During the next forty-eight hours or so nothing unusual occurred. The weather was fine; the sea was calm; the Admiral Paul plowed her way through the waters of the Caribbean Sea with a precision and perseverance which bespoke a speedy passage. On the third night out, however, we either sailed into or were overtaken by a most peculiar fog.

Both father and I had already retired to our staterooms for the night. I did not feel sleepy, and therefore sat up reading. The water was so calm that I scarcely felt the momentum of the boat as I read; its steady quiet motion seemed to rock me to sleep and I dozed off. Gradually I became disturbed by a persistent noice which woke me up and forced consciousness upon me.

I sat open eyed for a few moments, endeavoring to gather my wits together. Slowly I became aware that the disturbing noise was the ship's siren, which was blowing warnings at regular intervals of about a minute or so. As I listened I heard a faint answering rumble. Becoming fully awake by this time I laid down the magazine which was still in my hands and waited.

Suddenly there was a terrible grinding, tearing, ripping sound as something crashed into us. There arose terrifying screams of the injured and the noise

of many running feet. Fortunately we were on the opposite side of the ship, but she careened so that I thought we were going to topple over. She righted herself quickly, however, and I jumped for the door of my stateroom and opened it. As I passed into the passageway I came face to face with father, who was already coming for me. We knew something terrible had happened, and taking hold of each other's arms we went to the upper deck. Pandemonium seemed to reign there for a time, but the officers soon restored order. The ship was enveloped in a very thick fog; I thought it was smoke at first; the air was so stifling. Boats were lowered, and women and children were being put into them, but I refused to go until they were ready to take father. We heard some one in the distance calling through a megaphone that they were sending boats to our aid, so that most of the people on the Admiral Paul felt reassured.

It was not very long before father and I were told to get into a boat which was way down in the water below. They assisted us with a kind of a ladder and rope to go down, but oh, it felt simply awful. We were rowed over to the other ship and when we got there the same trouble arose again about going up the ship's side. A rope was tied under my arms, which helped to keep me steady while I climbed the ladder.

As I glanced upwards to see where I was climbing, some one peered down at me. In the dim light I thought I recognized the face, but was somewhat astonished by the frightened look that came into the gentleman's eyes that gazed down at me. The

face was withdrawn, then as I neared the deck it appeared again with such a puzzled expression that I was bewildered in turn. My heart fluttered and if it had not been for the rope that held me I fear that I should have fallen off the ladder.

Then just as I reached the top the stranger assisted me in unfastening the rope that held me, when out of the darkness that surrounded us I heard the voice of my brother Jim calling me. I could scarcely credit my senses. Could this be true?

I turned from the stranger to where the voice came and there sure enough stood Jim. Oh, the rapture, the joy of it all. Involuntarily I let out a scream that must have been heard miles and miles away and I rushed into his arms, and oh, dear me, you can imagine my feelings and the rest of it.

Presently father came up, and when I could tear myself away from Jim he took my place, while I stood endeavoring to recover my composure.

Very soon Jim called me and I went over to him and he introduced the stranger to me as Mr. Hirsch Starmanow, his best friend in the world, the man who had gone to his rescue in Ecuador.

"Starmanow," I tried to recall, as we shook hands, if I had ever heard the name before; but no, I was quite sure I had not. Yet the grasp of the hand that he gave me and the intentness of his gaze would have indicated that I was some long lost friend that he was greeting.

SOMEONE PEERED DOWN AT ME

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CHAPTER XV

THE AWAKENING

I saw the world in all its glory,
In early morning bliss;
Earth and sun in fond embrace,
I saw them hug and kiss.
I heard the Seraphim singing,
And mermaids peeped from the sea,
I heard the heavens a-ringing,
With a message of love for me.

OUR mutual surprise at this unexpected meeting in mid-ocean was great indeed. Father kept repeating his prayers and Jim was so amazed that he could hardly contain himself; he demanded to know over and over again what had brought us out there.

When I told him that we were on our way to Panama to look for him he was still more surprised. "Why, I cabled you from Panama that I was on my way home," he said. "Didn't you get my message?"

"No," I replied; "what day did you send it?"

"The seventeenth, just before we sailed."

"Oh, then that accounts for it," I explained, "we sailed from New York on the sixteenth of June and left Boston much before that, that's why the message never reached us."

"But father knew that I was on my way to the mine," insisted Jim. "If you had cabled there, Mr. Brown, the superintendent, would surely have informed you that I was on my way home."

"But Mr. DiSilvera was sure you never reached the mine and you never wrote, Jim; oh, why didn't you write and let us know where you were?" I demanded. To this he replied that he would explain everything later, soon as he had a chance.

Meantime, father was pouring out his gratitude to Mr. Starmanow for going to Jim's assistance. Indeed, he was much more outspoken than I, while Mr. Starmanow stood by in a sort of confused and bewildered manner, glancing from Jim to father, then to me and then back again. I doubt if he heard a word father was saying to him. Turning to Jim he urged that he take father and me to their cabin below, but I refused to go. Harrowing as the scene about us was, what with the audible moans and groans of the wounded, the whimpering of little children and weeping women, the awe-pitched conversation of the men, the sharp commands of the officers and the hustle and bustle of the crew—I preferred it to the still more terrifying prospect of being closed up below. I had had enough cabin for one night. I wanted to be in the open where I could see and hear all that was going on about me.

The deck was now pretty well crowded with people and the life boats were being hoisted into place.

"It looks as though they had all the people of your ship over, Miss Morgan," remarked Mr. Starmanow observantly, "and, if you don't want to go below, we had better see if we can find a more comfortable

place for you than this part of the deck," and so saying he led the way to the smoking room, which, strange to say, we found for the time being unoccupied. Here we were out of the turmoil of the deck, while the doors and rows of windows on either side of the room gave us fair means of observing all that was going on.

Presently we heard a distant explosion, which was followed by others in quick succession and my heart seemed to stop beating. Father kept saying his prayers over and over.

"Ah, there she goes," said Jim, regretfully; "I guess that's the last of your ship, Sis. What was its name?"

"The Admiral Paul."

"It has been a pretty narrow escape from death for a great many to-night," observed Mr. Starmanow. "Jim," he added, turning to my brother, "our assistance may still be needed on deck," and with "excuse me" to father and me he left us, followed by Jim.

I looked out after them, the fog was still upon us, but the boat had taken slight headway and was apparently proceeding on her course.

"Oh, father, father," I cried, realizing it all for the first time, "oh, father, just think of it, we have found Jim, he is with us on this boat and we are all safe and sound and on our way home again."

"Yes, yes, child, I know it," he replied, drawing me to him in a close embrace and kissing me. "Yes, dear," he continued retrospectively, "God in his mercy has been good to us this night—it is a miracle, nothing short of a miracle, Ruth."

"Have you ever met Mr. Starmanow before?"

"No, I have never seen him before."

"Isn't it wonderful? Jim says that Mr. Starmanow went to his rescue in Ecuador and saved his life. Do you know how long they have known each other?"

"No, I don't know; Jim didn't say. I don't understand it at all; I tell you it's a miracle, child. I can't explain it in any other way."

"It is certainly very remarkable," I conceded. "I wonder where Jim and Mr. Starmanow met. Did Jim say what success he had at the mine?"

"No, not yet; I don't care what he found or what he didn't find as long as we are safe again. Now child," he concluded solicitously, "I think you had better take some rest or you will get ill."

I thought father's advice very good. We had had a very trying time of it and I felt tired and weary. It was late, much after midnight. I cuddled up in a corner of a settee in the smoking room; father taking a chair near me—and I dozed off.

I must have slept soundly for some time, for when I opened my eyes the gray of the morning dawn filled the room. I did not immediately recall my whereabouts, nor the night's events, but lay there subconsciously enjoying the easy motion of the vessel. Gradually, my senses returned and with it a full realization of what had happened. I looked up and found myself gazing into the intent and expressive eyes of Mr. Starmanow. He smiled when he saw that I was awake; my heart fluttered and I felt a little frightened—abashed.

"Have you had a good rest, Miss Morgan?" he

inquired kindly.

"Ye-es, thank you," I replied. I was undecided whether to arise or to lie still. It was certainly very embarrassing with him standing over me. I wished he would go away and give me an opportunity to compose myself, but he didn't move a bit.

"It must have been a very trying night for you," he said again, not budging an inch or taking his eyes off me.

"Yes, it was very, very trying indeed; where are father and Jim?" I asked desperately.

"Promenading the deck; it's a very delightful morning and the sun is about to rise. Would you like to see it?"

"Oh, yes, I should like to see it very much indeed," I assured him. I was wishing inwardly that the cabin wall might open and give me a chance to escape, when in a flash an idea, which might solve my dilemma, presented itself.

"Do you think you could get me a glass of water, Mr. Starmanow?" I begged eagerly; "I feel terribly parched. Would you mind?"

"Why certainly not—I shall be delighted," he hastened to assure me as he hurried away.

I smiled. Mr. Starmanow was certainly becoming very interesting. I got up and straightened out my clothes and arranged my hair as best I could. Mr. Starmanow seemed very kind and desirous to be helpful and I didn't want him to think I was a dowdy. I was all mussed up and my clothes were pretty much wrinkled.

Presently he returned with the water and I drank with avidity, as I was really thirsty, but I didn't quite

realize it until I spoke.

We passed out on to the deck and stood at the railing. The fog had disappeared; the water was as calm as a pond—not a ripple to mar its glass-like surface. The distant eastern horizon, for which we were making, was steeped in wondrous colors of red and gold, heralding the glory of the approaching sun.

"Isn't it wonderful?" remarked Mr. Starmanow, smiling down into my eyes.

"Yes, yes, it is very wonderful indeed," I replied, catching my breath. I was really getting to be frightened when he looked into my eyes that way. But he turned his eyes seaward again and I felt more at ease. I stole a side glance at him and was surprised to find how big and tall he was—much taller than I. He was gazing abstractedly at the distant sun, which had just peeped forth and smiled at us. We stood in silent fascination at the scene before us, and then I fell to marvelling at the splendor of the sun's ascent. How wonderful it all was. The greatness of God's creation dawned upon me as never before. "How puny man's handiwork in comparison with it," I thought, "how poor the imitation that crumbles at the touch. Here was something worth while; life in being, light, warmth and color, to gladden the heart." The sun advanced as if to meet us, its smiling countenance peeping into the clear deep of the sea as if pleased at the reflection mirrored there.

I turned my eyes to the deck. Here the sight that the daylight revealed was rather sad. Every available space seemed to contain huddled, disheveled

heaps of slumbering humanity, giving our vessel the aspect of an impromptu hospital ship. Yet, there was consolation in the sight before me, for it spoke of a kind Providence and the many lives that were saved from a watery grave.

I glanced up again at the figure standing near me, he turned and smiled down at me again.

"Beautiful, beautiful," he cried. "No living being can ever reproduce its like. One sees marvellous handiwork, the greatest there is, but nothing to compare with this."

Somehow I felt a great comfort—a newer life—an awakening in his enthusiasm—a congenial spirit that my soul had been hungering for.

"Yes," I replied with a sigh, withdrawing my eyes from his, "it is very beautiful; I shall remember this scene as long as I live."

He seemed to draw a little closer to me. "So will I," he said. "It is unforgetable. And yet," he added, "one would have never thought it would really all come about in this way. It's simply marvelous."

I looked up, not quite understanding his last remark, but he was looking out to sea again.

By and by I fell to wondering if he was married. I became conscious of these thoughts and to hide my confusion I glanced over the ship's side again—watching its progress, smiling at the reflections my recent musings had engendered. The ship's prow was slowly plowing its way towards the eastern horizon, from which the sun had but lately risen; the calm mighty waters of the sea making way at our advance with a hissing, protesting sound, as if it did

not relish being thus disturbed from its early morning slumbers. Gradually, as I gazed I became aware of what I thought were distant clouds and yet not exactly like it.

"What's that?" I exclaimed, questioningly.

"That in the distance?" he queried. "I have also been watching it for some time; it looks like land to me, but I wonder what place it can be."

Just then one of the officers came along our way and Mr. Starmanow asked him what land that was.

"That," replied the officer, "is the Island of Jamaica. We are making for Kingston for temporary repairs, and should be there before noon."

"That is surprising news, indeed," observed Mr. Starmanow, as the officer went his way. "Well, so after all, Miss Morgan, this voyage is not to be our journey's end. However, it doesn't matter much," he continued, smiling happily, I thought, "for it will give us the unexpected pleasure of visiting one of the most popular of the West India Islands of which I have heard so much about and longed to see."

Just then Jim came up with a pleasant good morning and informed us that he had routed out one of the stewards who had kindly agreed to get some breakfast for us.

We followed Jim to the dining room, where we found father waiting for us, and seating ourselves around a table we soon had a bountiful breakfast spread before us, to which we did ample justice.

After breakfast we again went on deck, and selecting a cozy nook, we made ourselves comfortable, and I listened for the first time—for Jim had told most of it to father in the early morning hours—to Jim's

narrative of his experiences in Ecuador and the part Mr. Starmanow had played in his rescue, and of their visit to the mine.

In so far as the affairs at the mine were concerned, we were apparently as much in the dark as ever. All depended now on what Mr. John Brown would do when he came to Boston, if he came at all.

To me it seemed as if it was all up in the air, but I didn't care so very much after all now, as long as we had Jim with us again, and I said so.

Father quite agreed with me and Mr. Starmanow, who had temporarily withdrawn from our company when Jim began to speak in praise of him, and who now came up and joined us again, was of the opinion that Mr. Brown intended to have matters put to rights when he got to Boston. But then we all agreed that if the mine was actually a failure there would be nothing to put to rights. And we settled it right then and there that father was not to put another dollar into it no matter what happened, in fact, he had none to put in even if he wanted to.

That settled, we all felt happy again, and made ready to make the best of the rest of our voyage.

Mr. Starmanow now took full charge of all arrangements and seemed very kind and solicitous for our welfare.

Time passed very quickly that morning, and almost before we were aware of it, our vessel was being made fast to the wharf.

The captain, we learned, had spoken to the authorities while making the harbor and had made known to them the cause of our unexpected visit, with the result that when we were boarded by the

harbor and customs officials our landing was facilitated in every way.

As we stood waiting for the gangplank to be thrown across I looked up to find Mr. Starmanow smiling into vacancy. "A penny for your thoughts," I said, smiling in turn.

"I think it might be worth more than that," he replied, looking quizzically at me and still smiling.

"Is that so; may I know what it is about?"

"Why, yes," he replied, "I was thinking if I was likely to find on this island the Model City from which Miss Hilda hailed from."

"Hilda? And who—who is Miss Hilda, pray?"

"A very very dear friend of mine," he laughingly replied.

As soon as we came ashore we procured conveyances and proceeded at once to the Hotel Myrtle Bank. I am frank to admit, however, that I didn't enjoy the ride at all.

It occurred to me on the way over that it is most remarkable that no sooner does a girl meet a man she might learn to like, but what he is either married or some other girl has first call on him. Well, I didn't care—why should I? I wasn't going to marry at all—not in a great hurry anyway.

CHAPTER XVI

Hope Gardens

"Well, well, Ulysses, then I see,
I shall not have thee here:
And therefore I will come to thee,
And take my fortune there.
I must be won that cannot win,
Yet lost, were I not won,
For beauty hath created been
T'undo, or be undone."

—Samuel Daniel.

IMMEDIATELY upon our arrival at the hotel father cabled to mother in New York in order to relieve her of any anxiety for our safety on account of the news of the shipwreck; Jim did likewise to Mr. Courtney. I spent the afternoon taking a most needed rest, while the men folks occupied their time making some purchases and taking a first look around town. We all met again at dinner and, although we made heroic efforts to be jolly it was rather forced. The tragic experience of the night before cast a gloom over us and we were tired and exhausted, so with mutual wishes for a good night we retired at a very early hour.

The following morning at breakfast Mr. Starmanow informed us that he had made inquiries at the

Steamship Company's office concerning our passage home, but had been unable to obtain any definite information. The best reply he could get, he said, was that arrangements would be made for us as soon as possible and that ample notice would be given us of the time of sailing. This left us to our own resources, to spend the time intervening as best we could. For my part I needed to do some shopping in order to replenish my depleted wardrobe, for I had lost every stitch of clothing, excepting that which I had on, with the sinking of the Admiral Paul. So drafting father to do escort duty I sallied forth to make my purchases—a task very dear to every woman's heart.

The first few days of our stay in Kingston passed quickly and uneventfully. I was kept quite busy, for the most part, with my wardrobe, while the men folks—excepting father, who, for the greater part of the time, was kept busy by me—were making daily excursions to various places of interest about the island. We were all sure to meet every day at dinner, however, when we would relate to each other our experiences of the day, the places we had visited, and what we had seen and heard.

This exchange of confidence supplied us with all the necessary material for conversation at the table and time passed pleasantly enough. My associations with Mr. Starmanow were congenial. He was very considerate and I kind of liked his ways, but I studiously avoided any intimacy between us. I hadn't the slightest desire of taking Miss Hilda's place, nor of interfering with that young lady's prospects.

Mr. Starmanow had made several futile attempts

to have me join them on some of their excursions, but seeing it was useless he desisted. He looked piqued by my refusals and I could see that he was somewhat troubled by it. I really could not help it. I couldn't have joined him in the first few days at Kingston anyway, even if I wanted to, seeing that I didn't have a thing fit to wear. But men are so unreasonable about such matters—they don't understand it at all. Moreover, I didn't see any very good reason why he should have cared. I wasn't his "very very dear friend Hilda," anyhow, so why be so disconsolate about it? I realized that Jim's company day in and day out without any deviation may have become a little irksome to Mr. Starmanow. But then if he didn't want to be lonesome why couldn't he be a little patient until he got home again?

On our fourth day at Kingston, however, Jim suggested that we all take a trip to the Hope Gardens. He was quite sure that none of us—not even I—could leave Jamaica without paying at least one visit to the Gardens without being shamed for our delinquency forever afterwards. Spurred by this threat and having no longer my dressmaker for an excuse I consented. I had heard so much about the place that I really wanted to see what it was like.

We started out after luncheon and it was well into the afternoon when we arrived there after a very pleasant ride. We found the Gardens all that had been said of them, and more. I should not have wanted to miss them for anything; it was simply gorgeous; a dream of native splendor with a magnificent background of purple hills. As we strolled along their winding paths, father and Jim leading

and Mr. Starmanow and I following, the setting sun accentuating the riot of natural colors into a maze of red glowing splendor—I felt as though I was in fairyland.

It seemed to have a most extraordinary effect on Mr. Starmanow; so much so that he almost frightened me.

"Do you know," he said in his quiet, thoughtful way, gazing about him, "do you know I feel as though you and I had met in this garden long before this."

"But—but that cannot be," I exclaimed, looking up at him in surprise. "I have never set foot on this island before. Have you?"

"No, I have not," he replied, smiling into my eyes. "No, I have not, but I may have dreamed about it. Do you dream?"

"Oh, yes, sometimes," I replied, laughing, "and oftentimes I build castles in the air, too."

"Speaking of castles," he remarked, "there is another wonderful place on this Island—not far from town, you may have heard of it—Newcastle they call it—way up in the clouds on top of a mountain. Do you ride—I mean horseback?"

"Yes," I admitted. "I do. It was one of the things that I was crazy about that father indulged me in. I needn't ask if you do, knowing of your adventure in Ecuador."

"No, that's so. I always keep one or two horses when at home. It's my greatest delight to go cantering about. I like it as an exercise. What do you say to taking a ride up to Newcastle in the morning?"

"I'll see," I replied, non-committally.

The conversation then changed to other subjects, poetry and music, and the opera.

"Speaking of operas," he remarked, "did you witness the performance of Aubert's 'La Forêt Bleu' at the Boston Opera House?"

"No; did you?"

"Yes, I did," he replied. "Knowing that you come from Boston I thought that perhaps you may have witnessed it."

"Was it good?"

"The scene of the awakening of the Princess was a delightful picture that I have not yet forgotten."

"Oh, and—and—did Miss Hilda like it, too?"

I don't know what made me ask that question. It was entirely involuntary—I did it without thinking, but it seemed to have an amazing effect on my companion. He stopped short, obliging me to turn about to see what the matter was. He stood there as if dumbfounded, with the most peculiar, the most quizzical look on his face that I had ever seen on any one before.

"Why, what's the matter, Mr. Starmanow?" I asked.

"Oh, nothing, nothing at all," he finally managed to say. "I beg your pardon," he went on hastily, "I—eh—certain thoughts came to me—a certain recollection—something that suddenly recurred to me—so that I forgot myself. I hope you will pardon me. No, Miss Hilda was not present with me at that performance. I did not meet her until some time later."

"Oh, I see," I observed out of politeness to say

something. As a matter of fact I didn't quite seem to understand it.

We walked on in silence for quite a spell.

"Speaking of books," he said presently, "I recall coming across an old book on one of my rummages in a very old book shop in London entitled 'Legends of the Punjab.' Its author was so little known that I cannot even now remember his name. He was an old English soldier who had seen service in India and his stories were mainly based on old Indian legends that he gathered during his stay in that country. One of these stories, 'The Wooing of Raja Ben Raja,' impressed itself so strongly upon my mind that oftentimes, particularly when I am in surroundings such as these, it recurs to me again and again. Would you care to hear it, Miss Morgan?"

He always addressed me as Miss Morgan—not Morgelefsky.

"Yes, I should like to very much," I replied, greatly impressed by the manner of his request.

"Raja Ben Raja," Mr. Starmanow went on to relate, "was the son of one of the reigning Princes of India and at the age of eight years was betrothed to a Princess two years his junior—the daughter of a neighboring and friendly monarch. It was a family arrangement, made mainly for the purpose of uniting the two houses and of strengthening their power.

"Some seven years thereafter a war broke out in which the father of the Princess, with many other members of her family, were slain and others taken away captives. What became of the young Princess, whether she was dead or alive, no one knew. Nevertheless, the parents of Raja Ben Raja had im-

pressed it strongly upon the mind of their son that it was his duty to be faithful to his betrothal if his fiancée was ever found alive and unmarried. The young Raja had but a slight remembrance of the baby princess, but her beauty and accomplishments were so much harped upon by his parents that she gradually took shape in his imagination as the sweetest, the most beautiful and the most accomplished being on earth.

"Having more leisure time on his hands than was good for him, with very little, if anything, to occupy his mind, the princess was continually in his thoughts, so that he came everlastingly to think of her by day and to dream of her by night, as the Goddess of his very existence. All his efforts to locate the princess failed and his offerings of large rewards for news of her whereabouts were of no avail. He remained true to her memory, however; no other woman held the slightest interest for him.

"Eventually his parents became much perturbed by the possibility that the love of the princess which they had helped to implant in the heart of their only son was likely to cost them the life of an heir, and the perpetuation of their dynasty; for the prince was pining away. They resolved upon the heroic measure of sending him abroad in the hope that amidst new people and new scenes he might forget.

"Thus the prince journeyed to London incog with but a valet and another servitor as his bodyguard. The prince took up his residence with a genteel family of small means in one of the fashionable suburbs of London.

"For the first two or three weeks of his life in

London the prince made no great gains in the health of his body or mind. His lost love still laid heavily upon him, although the change of scene did extricate him from the slough of despondency. The prince was wont to take his daily exercise on horseback in one of the fashionable parks near his residence. On one of these occasions, about four weeks after his sojourn in London, the prince came suddenly face to face with two ladies riding in an open carriage. One of the ladies was quite young and beautiful, while the other was much older. So strong was the resemblance between the young lady in the carriage and the princess of his dreams that the young Raja reined his horse so sharply that it stood on its haunches and nearly threw him; while his two attendants nearly came to grief through colliding with their master's mount, not foreseeing his unexpected action and the necessity to follow his example and draw rein.

"As soon as the carriage passed the prince wheeled about and followed it at a discreet distance. He had recognized, he thought, the lady of his dreams and was going to make sure of her whereabouts. This he did. But he could find out little about her. She dwelt in a beautiful villa not far from his own residence. The master of the house was Major Glenningdon of the Regular Army, retired. The elder lady in the carriage was his wife; the young lady was either their daughter or niece—no one knew for certain. But she bore their name—that much he learned. The little family lived quietly and were highly respected. 'Now,' mused the prince, 'if she was in my own country I might do one of several

things. I might for one thing do as some of my forebears did upon occasion—boldly seize my lady love, bear her to my castle and make love to her afterwards. This, of course, was out of the question in England, or I might make myself known, obtain an introduction to the major and perhaps be invited to his house and lay siege to my lady that way.'

"The upshot of all this was that the prince decided upon a plebeian course of love making. He learned his lady's ways; her comings and goings and laid siege to her heart by proxy. He would arouse her interest by mystery. So he sent her flowers and books and rich gifts without even so much as a card to say whom it was from. He kept this up so systematically, so continuously and so cleverly that the major's ire, kindled at first to burning point, gradually gave way to amusement, then to interest, then to an unsatiable curiosity—nay more, to an unbounded desire to meet so persistent, so constant and so wealthy a wooer.

"As for the young lady, her interest in this unknown knight-errant was so greatly aroused that she lay awake nights weaving amazing pictures of him. Her nerves were wrought to the highest pitch—being kept on the alert continually—speculating on the probability of whom he might be and in the expectation of his eventual advent. She became as anxious to get a glimpse of him as he was to meet her.

"When the prince thought the time was ripe for revealing himself he just sent Miss Gleningdon a single beautiful rose with a note attached to it which contained a simple message that he would wear its mate in the park to-morrow. Mrs. Gleningdon and

the young lady were out driving in the park the afternoon of the following day and his dream girl wore the rose and the prince rode up and saluted. To make a long story short he was invited to call and had a very long interview with the major."

I looked up questioningly at Mr. Starmanow, for he had stopped in his narrative.

"Well," I said, "that isn't the end of it? Who was the young lady?"

"I shall tell you that, Miss Morgan, he said, teasingly, "when I tell you all about Hilda."

CHAPTER XVII

THE RIDE TO NEWCASTLE

Though castles are built in the air,
Persistency will often get there.

WHEN we returned to the hotel we found a message from the Steamship Company. It stated that we were to be ready to sail for home on the following Tuesday morning. As this was Thursday evening we still had four days to spend at Kingston.

That evening at dinner, seated opposite Mr. Starmanow, I was particularly struck by his appearance. Never before in our short acquaintance had I been so greatly impressed with his manners, the contour of his features and the strength of character depicted there. Mr. Starmanow was unusually gay throughout the meal, yet not obtrusively so. It was as though the effervescent contents in a tightly corked bottle were being carefully released. The performance was rather attractive. Jim entered into the spirit of the situation and even father, who had been very quiet and preoccupied of late, contributed some bits of banter and joined heartily in the laughter that made its rounds. I could not help becoming a party to the gaiety of my surroundings, and I felt a subdued happiness through it all. A new dawn

seemed to be breaking in upon me—a new light to rise upon my horizon. A new sensation was tugging at my heart tempered by a vague uneasiness that I could not as yet fathom or explain.

I longed to be alone—to give my feelings full sway, to dream upon and analyze them. Nevertheless, I did not want to act a prude and spoil the evening's pleasure, so when Mr. Starmanow proposed that we attend the performance that evening to be given by Mr. and Mrs. Smiley and their London Company in the open air theatre adjoining the hotel I readily consented.

"What's on the bill for to-night?" I questioned Mr. Starmanow as he was helping me on with my evening wrap.

"The Taming of the Shrew," he replied, smiling. "I wonder if Shakespeare ever dreamed that his jests would ever travel as far as this?"

Just then our hands met, and for the first time I trembled at his touch. It was a new and unlooked for sensation, and I felt rather angry with myself for being so silly. At the end of the Prologue our eyes met again.

"Am I a Lord and have I such a lady?
Or do I dream, or have I dreamed till now?
I do not sleep; I see, I hear, I speak:"

quoted he from Sly's lines.

"No, my good Lord, it is more pleasing stuff," I answered, laughing, without looking at him.

"Ah," he said tantalizingly, "and that good lady means?"

"That I'd rather the concrete; at best delusions are sweet only while they last, and then there is the awakening always to be reckoned with."

" 'Tis well said, but what then?"

"I don't know; if I remember rightly, Shakespeare doesn't reveal what happened to the tinker in the morning."

"That is so. Have you read Omar Khayyam? You have; well then you will perhaps recall these lines:

"And this I know; Whether the one True Light,
Kindle to love or wrath—consume me quite,
One flash of It within the Tavern caught,
Better than in the Temple lost outright."

"But think of the awakening," I urged again.

That set him to thinking.

"And yet," said he, presently, "Delusion is parent to Imagination, and without these two factors in human life, Ambition, Hope and Love would cease to exist, and the entire fabric which constitutes 'The Wheel of Destiny,' as we know it, would be utterly destroyed."

"Goodness me," I exclaimed, "what a terrible alternative you present."

"And yet I believe it to be true."

"But how can delusion be truth?"

"It is not; delusion and truth are the antithesis of each other. Nevertheless, they are co-ordinate factors in keeping 'The Wheel of Destiny' going, just the same as fire and water will under given conditions produce steam for locomotion."

I felt beaten. Luckily the curtain went up just then on the first act, which gave me fair opportunity for an orderly retreat.

The play as a whole was not a brilliant affair, although the Smileys did very well in the leading parts. But the rough humor of the play did not appeal to me at all. I did not like Petruchio—that is, the Petruchio he portrayed. It may have been good breeding in the days of the Author to speak of his newly-wedded wife in the language attributed to him:

"I will be master of my own,
She is my goods, my chattels; she is my house,
My household stuff, my field, my barn,
My horse, my ox, my ass, my anything."

When you draw a picture such as this for a spirited, twentieth century American girl to gaze upon, its humor, if it ever had any, loses its effect.

"How did you like the play?" I asked Mr. Starmanow when the final curtain had been rung down and we were making ready to go.

He chuckled.

"Mr. Petruchio," I continued, "was apparently not only a boastful gentleman but he seems to have made good."

"How is that?" questioned Mr. Starmanow as he was leading me towards one of the tables on the hotel veranda.

"Why," I replied, "look at the results. He not only forced the proud and wilful Katherine to admit that:

" 'But the sun is not when you say it is not,
And the moon changes, even as your mind,
What you will have it named, even that it is,
And so it shall be so for Katherine.'

but he also made her play the part of disciplinarian to the dulcet Bianca and the widow and to enlarge upon what constitutes the duties of a wife, to their discomfiture."

Father and Jim came along just then, and we all sat down at one of the tables.

"I wouldn't take Mr. Shakespeare too seriously, Miss Morgan," said Mr. Starmanow after he had ordered some ices; "the plot of 'The Taming of the Shrew' is to my mind too ridiculous even for an annual Frat affair of the ordinary Sagebrush College, but it's a Shakespearian Comedy and that goes anywhere."

" 'The Merchant of Venice' is still worse," observed father.

"Don't let that trouble you very much," said Mr. Starmanow again, "Shakespeare saw things through lenses of extraordinary magnifying power, so that most everything he has written appears greatly exaggerated. It is the beauty of his lines, and the manner of their saying that has lived so long after him, rather than the subjects he has sought to portray."

"Yes," I admitted, appreciating his point of view; I could readily see the justice of what he said.

"Now," continued Mr. Starmanow, "let us forget the Ogre and the Dame and even Shakespeare for a little while at least. Let us see what we can find in the real live things about us. There is, I think, more

real poetry in and about this beautiful Island and in this enchanting moonlight night than poets have ever dreamed of. What do you all say to taking a walk along shore and enjoy the real things?"

We gladly assented and wended our way along the breakers; the beautiful moon illuminating our path and converting the waters of the sea and the beaten spray into magic silver. The subdued voices of the waves as they gently came rolling to meet us before they were shattered by the cruel stones, whispered felicitations wafted to us from the twinkling stars on the far horizon. And amidst it all I heard his voice, and the vibrating answer within my heart. I forgot Baptista and Petruchio and Katherine. I forgot Di-Silvera; I forgot the world. I was living in a new enchantment from which I feared to wake, but wake presently I did when I heard father's voice saying, "Well, now, young people, it's about time to return to the hotel. It's nearly one o'clock, what?" (Father got on to this form of hackneyed speech before we did.) Even Jimmy stifled a yawn as we faced about.

"Nearly one o'clock," echoed Mr. Starmanow in surprise, "why, I didn't think it was much after eleven. By George, you are right, Mr. Morgan," he added, glancing at his watch; "how time does fly."

We were all late at breakfast the next morning, so the trip to Newcastle had to be given up for that day, but I promised Mr. Starmanow to surely go with him Monday morning.

Later that day I caught brother Jim alone for a wonder, and asked him to take a walk with me, which he did.

"Jim," I said nonchalantly, "has Mr. Starmanow

said anything to you about a Miss Hilda?"

Jim looked up in surprise.

"Well, Sis," he exclaimed, "jealous already?"

"Don't be silly, Jim; how can I be jealous if I am not in love?"

"Oh, I see, I don't know, I am sure. Hilda, Hilda?" he repeated exasperatedly, puckering his forehead. "No; Hirsch has certainly never said anything to me about her. What's in the wind, Sis?"

"Why nothing, you foolish boy. I just wanted to know."

"All right—right oh, but there must be a reason—there always is."

"Goodness gracious, Jim," I flared, "can't one ask a simple question without being grilled?"

"Why certainly, kiddo, go as far as you like," he replied, affectionately, linking his arm into mine, "but one can get grilled here this time of day without a question being asked."

I laughed. It was about three o'clock in the afternoon and the sun was still beating down pretty hot.

"Mr. Starmanow," I volunteered, not caring to be misunderstood by my brother, "has spoken of Miss Hilda during some of our conversations. I took it that she was a very, very dear friend of his, and I thought you might know about her."

"Well, you've got me," commented Jim, clearly perplexed, "I have never heard her name mentioned until you spoke of it a few minutes ago. Did Hirsch say who or where she was?"

"No, I don't think so," I replied thoughtfully. "I got the impression when he first spoke of her that

she hailed from some town on this island, but it looks as though I was mistaken."

"That clearly beats the Dutch—it's all Greek to me," commented Jim. "However, take it from me, Ruth," he continued emphatically, "Hilda or no Hilda, Hirsch Starmanow is to my thinking a pretty good catch for any girl."

"You don't suppose I am going to run after him, do you?" I demanded hotly.

"Run after him—no, of course not; I wouldn't want you to do that for any man, but if you liked each other I should like it very much myself—Hirsch is a crack-a-jack fellow, Sis."

I made no reply to this.

"Don't you like him?"

"I am not going to throw myself at any man's head," I argued, non-committally, "and if Mr. Starmanow is already pledged to some other girl I cannot see how my liking or disliking him is going to make any difference."

"But you don't dislike him?"

"No-o."

"Oh, I see which way the wind blows," Jim observed wisely, hugging me to him. "I wouldn't let a little thing like Hilda worry you much, Sis. Unless I am greatly mistaken in the man, Hirsch Starmanow is not the kind of a fellow that would take up with a girl while he was engaged to another."

"Oh, Jim, dear," I exclaimed, to change the subject, "have you noticed how careworn and dejected poor father is looking lately? I am afraid his loss in the mine, together with his other business troubles, may have serious effect on his health."

"Yes, I have noticed it," admitted Jim, regretfully, "but if his shares turn out to be all right, even if it's only that the assessment is cancelled, I think he'll pick up again quick enough."

"What do you think are the prospects? Do you think there are any?"

"I'll tell you, Sis," said Jim thoughtfully, "it's just like this. I don't know what's at the back of this, but I do think Mr. John Brown is on the level—means to be anyway. Now he has promised to straighten things out as soon as he gets to Boston, and he is likely to get there, allowing for our delay, as quickly as we do."

"Then we shall not have to wait very long anyway?"

"No, I don't think so, dear," replied Jim, reassuringly, "and let us hope for the best."

The next day or two passed very quietly. For the most part we were making ready for Tuesday's sailing. As all our luggage was lost, there were some few little things that we needed to get in order to carry us over the voyage home.

Mr. Starmanow was as considerate and attentive as ever, looking after my slightest wants and apparently only too pleased to be given the opportunity of helping. My own inclinations, though, after Thursday evening's events, were to fight shy of his advances. This I did as best I could, without giving offence or seeming rude. As a matter of fact I didn't know myself what to do or how to act. I was seemingly fluttering aimlessly in the air, not knowing whether to land or to fly.

Sunday at dinner Mr. Starmanow said he had

selected two horses for our next morning's ride to Newcastle, and suggested a short canter that afternoon to give the horses a tryout. This we did. The mounts he had chosen were of almost equal size, a bay horse for himself and a white mare for me. They were medium sized, stocky animals, intelligent and well broken, and needed but little guidance. My mare had a delightfully gliding trot that I very much liked, and we enjoyed our Sunday afternoon outing exceedingly well.

We were up bright and early Monday morning and in our saddles by eight o'clock. Mine was a side saddle mount, as I could never bring myself to ride astride.

"Well," observed Mr. Starmanow, smiling gaily as we started off, our mounts cantering easily side by side, "here goes for the mountain peak and the castles in the air."

"And one may still dream," I said, as I noticed the heavy cloud that was calmly overhanging the mountain top like a huge cap on a giant's head, "the lady seemingly has still her night cap on."

"Yes," he remarked, looking up, "she does not need to hurry, the sun is usually late getting up there."

"And does the sun dispel the clouds?"

"No, not always; it frequently creates them. It takes storm and wind to disperse the clouds and rain to dispel them."

"Even as in our own lives?"

"Even so, 'tis the passions and storms and the tears within us when they burst forth and expend themselves that tend to clear our vision and permit

us to see the clear sunlight again and to feel its worth."

"And yet it is in the darkness that we build our castles in the air which the sun dissipates."

"Not necessarily so; one may bring forth to the sunlight dream castles worth while and if they are true gold they will stand the test."

"Oh, why do you philosophize so much?" I burst forth involuntarily, "why aren't you more human; why don't you come to earth and contradict me, or say something foolish?"

He chuckled joyfully.

"Why, you started it—the philosophy of this morning," he charged, man-fashion, blaming it all on to me.

I repented my rashness almost as quickly as the words were spoken, and sought to excuse it.

"The serpent beguiled me," I protested contritely.

"And I get the blame, and not even the slightest bite of the apple as yet."

"That's more natural," I observed, laughing.

"What, the serpent or the apple?"

"No, just you."

"And if I should tell you that I love you?" he asked, unsuccessfully trying to catch my eyes.

"I should turn right about and canter home."

"Ah, but the sea is between you and home, and it isn't even a red sea to be split open and walked through dry shod."

"I meant the Hotel, of course, don't you know I meant the Hotel?"

"Perhaps, yet if I have been correctly informed by the soothsayers of many ages one is not to take

the words of a lady too literally."

"Oh."

"So when you threatened to canter home I knew by all the token of Seerdom that you would not do it, so it did not matter what particular home you had in mind."

"Is that a challenge?"

Our eyes met for the fraction of a second. I grasped my reins more firmly and sped forward.

"I see the giant lady has dropped her night cap," I heard him say as the bay came up alongside again. "I guess there is sunshine ahead."

I did not reply.

"Would you trust me?" he asked presently.

"Would I be with you now if I did not?" I asked in turn. "How can I trust you more?"

"With your future happiness?"

"Please don't ask me to-day," I pleaded under my breath.

"To-morrow?"

"Yes, to-morrow, if you want to," I murmured.

We rode on in silence for a space.

"What about Hilda?" I blurted out.

I heard his hearty laugh—I did not dare look at him.

"I will tell you all about Hilda to-morrow," I heard him say.

"Oh."

"You won't mind—till then?"

"No—o."

The ride from the Hotel to the mountainside is but a short one and before we barely realized it we were at its base.

"Newcastle," Mr. Starmanow now took occasion to explain, "is a British Military Cantonment perched on the side of the mountain. To ride up to it," he said, "we should have to proceed in Indian fashion, as the road is not wide enough for two to ride abreast."

At his suggestion I took the lead, and in this fashion we commenced our ascent. The incidents of this trip will forever linger in my memory; the gorgeousness of the scene about us, the lights and the shadows of the rising sun cast upon gap, gorge and distant plain formed a picture of tropical splendor never to be forgotten.

We were ascending a high acclivity on a narrow tortuous path alongside of a high rocky mountain wall that rose to the heavens above us on the one side and a deep abyss growing deeper and deeper with our ascent on the other.

While it looked pretty venturesome, yet I did not mind it at all at first, and rather enjoyed the delightful scene about me. But I soon found as we progressed upwards that it made me dizzy to look to our right—the side where the abyss was. This frightened me very much, so that I did not dare look to that side at all. I never realized until that moment what it meant to be a coward. I was so frightened that if I could I would have turned right about and gone back. But that I couldn't do, of course, on account of the narrowness of the path, and yet I was too much ashamed to make my fears known to Mr. Starmanow.

We kept up quite a conversation at first, commenting upon the scenery and speculating upon the

gruesomeness of the battles that must have been waged in the days when piratical power held sway over the island. But soon my volubility gave way to monosyllables and monosyllables to utter silence, and shortly after I no longer heard Mr. Starmanow's voice.

I leaned over my saddle and put my hands on the mare's mane. What I really longed to do was to put my arms around her neck for greater security. Yet, filled with ever-increasing horror as I was, I was still too shame-faced to commit that baby act.

Suddenly, I don't know whether it was because of my touch on her mane which communicated my terror to the animal, or because she shied at some object unseen to me—whatever the cause, I felt the mare suddenly tremble beneath me for a moment, and then she began to caper about, and before I realized what was happening, she was floundering on the brink of the abyss, threatening every moment to go over the side, and to carry me with her to the fathomless depths below to sure death and destruction. I was so terror-stricken and dazed by this unlooked-for calamity that I did not even have the power to cry out for help. But just as I gave myself up for lost, and closed my eyes not to witness my own doom, I felt myself violently seized, and heard the passionate voice of Mr. Starmanow crying to me, "Quick, let go; for heaven's sake let go of those reins."

I instinctively obeyed, and the next moment the heart-rending, almost human shriek of the animal reached me as she went crashing to the depths below, while I lay tightly clasped in Mr. Starmanow's embrace, too stunned to resist, feeling his kisses on my

brow and lips and listening to his words of endearment. "Thank God, oh, thank God, you are safe, dear," I heard him say over and over again.

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And to think that Miss Gleningdon was not the lost princess after all.

PART IV

COURTNEY'S STORY

CHAPTER XVIII

Introducing Francis Kidder, Esquire

When Wit Meets Wit the Senses Revel

ON the morning of June eighteenth Miss Muirhead informed me that Mr. Kidder of the law firm of Kidder, Jones & Wiseman, was on the line and wanted to speak to me.

"Hello," I said, taking up the receiver, "who is this?—Mr. Kidder, oh, yes, good morning, Mr. Kidder. I am fine, thank you. How are you?—That's good. Anything I can do for you?—Yes. I can see you within half an hour if you will come over.—Eleven o'clock? All right, make it at eleven then."

I hung up the receiver and pondered some on this contemplated visit. Mr. Kidder was the senior member of the law firm of Kidder, Jones & Wiseman, corporation attorneys, principally handling the business of mining corporations. I smiled at the thought of Kidder coming to see me. I could almost guess the business he was coming to see me on. I did not have to be much of a prophet for that, either.

Francis Kidder was between the ages of forty-five and fifty, a bright lawyer, and a pretty smooth article —as the saying goes. A jolly, big fat chap, with an ever ready expansive smile on his smooth-shaven face. I also recalled his large arms and hands, with

the palms of which he was wont to smite his friends on the shoulder when accosting them. You could not very well resent the familiarity, or the pain, or both, since the assault was usually accompanied by a broad smile and loud laughter. He might have been considered a pretty good fellow if it were not for the dissipating audacity in his grey gimlet-like eyes and lowering brow that seemed to belie his otherwise apparently hearty and sincere manner.

My letter sent to the New York office of "The Chimborazo Gold and Metals Mining Company" had remained unanswered for several days. I wrote again, demanding immediate compliance with my requests on behalf of Mr. Morgelefsky. To this I received the company's reply that Mr. Morgelefsky had received due notice for the annual meeting, which also contained a special notice of the contemplated consideration of the Board's recommendation for the levying of an assessment; that Mr. Morgelefsky had failed to be present at the meeting either in person or by proxy, and that no objection in any form had been received from him against the company's action prior to the adoption of the vote authorizing the assessment. They also informed me that they had furnished Mr. Morgelefsky, as well as all the other stockholders, with copies of the annual reports; that the supply had been exhausted and therefore they were unable to send any additional copies. As for my request for a more extensive outline of the contemplated use of the money to be raised by the assessment, they were very sorry, but the Board felt obliged to decline my request at this time as impracticable. The call for the assessment contained all

the information they could give at this time and, therefore, they would refer me to the contents of that call.

This reply on the part of the company did not surprise me, as it simply bore out and strengthened my suspicion that there was something wrong. I considered their refusal, however, sufficient ground to proceed upon.

I immediately communicated with my correspondents in New York, Messrs. Stone, Black & Forsythe, furnishing them with all the data at my disposal with the request that they proceed at once to draft a bill of complaint and take steps to obtain an injunction against "The Chimborazo Gold and Metals Mining Company" from collecting or attempting to collect the assessment levied, and from declaring as forfeited any shares of stock upon which the assessment may not be paid until the further order of the court.

Although I was very much in doubt as to whether or not the court would grant a temporary injunction, I felt that a mere order of notice issued by the court would oblige the company to act and perhaps force it to show its hand.

The court, however, did grant a temporary injunction, the pleadings were in due time completed and the case set down for a hearing, which was to take place soon.

I suspected that Mr. Kidder's contemplated visit had something to do with the case and awaited his arrival with some interest. I was not kept in suspense very long, for he arrived promptly at eleven o'clock and was ushered in to my private office. He

responded to my greeting with his customary heartiness, but without the familiar slap on the shoulder, for I was well barricaded behind my desk.

"I came to see you," he said, with the usual large smile expanding his features, meanwhile watching me shrewdly, "with reference to a matter of some stock in the 'Chimborazo Gold and Metals Mining Company' held by a client of yours called Morgelefsky."

"I am afraid," I replied deprecatingly, "that you have come to the wrong man. The matter is now in the hands of Stone, Black & Forsythe, my New York representatives."

"I understand that is so in a way," he said, his brows lowering, "but I guess you are the man I want all right," and he shot a sharp look at me and then shifted his eyes when he saw I was ready to meet his gaze. "I have a communication here," he said, "from Messrs. Eldridge and Young, who have the matter in hand for the 'Chimborazo Company' at the New York end, in which they state that Messrs. Stone, Black & Forsythe have agreed that we may take the matter up with you directly on a question of settlement. If my efforts to reach a settlement are unsuccessful they would like to have you agree to a transfer of the case to the Circuit Court at Boston for trial."

He handed me a communication from his correspondents, which upon reading I found to be as he had stated.

"All right," I said, handing the letter back to him. "Fire away."

"You know me," he said, "no beating about the bush. I want to come to the point quickly. Life

is too short to waste time. What does your client want?"

I wondered what was in the wind, contemplating Kidder's countenance, reflectively endeavoring to read through his eyes, if I could, what was going on in the brain back of it. "I do not know," I replied finally, "as I can say any more now than what I have already stated in my letter to your clients."

"Will your client sell his stock?"

"I do not know whether he will or not. I am willing to submit to him any proposition you care to make."

Kidder drummed the top of the desk with his finger tips thoughtfully, allowing his gaze to rove alternately between myself and vacancy. "I believe," he said at last, his lowering brow and expansive grin fighting for supremacy, "that the 'Chimborazo Company' would be willing to pay your client par value for his stock, minus, of course, the two dollar assessment in order to avoid litigation. They have absolute confidence in the ultimate success of the mine, but now require additional capital to carry on needed work. The two dollar assessment is the means by which they hope to raise the necessary funds. If your client does not care to meet the assessment, they have parties who are willing to take his place, providing, of course, that they can get the stock at a price that will permit them to pay the assessment without having to pay more than par for the whole."

"Well," I said, "I shall submit your offer to Mr. Morgelefsky as soon as I can get in communication with him."

"Ah," Kidder commented, allowing his eyes to

rove again and then boring mine with their auger-like intensity, "your client must act quickly if he wants that six thousand dollars. We don't want to be Jewed in the matter."

I jumped to my feet.

"I want you to withdraw that remark at once, Kidder, and to apologize, otherwise I shall refuse to have any future dealings with you."

"All right, all right, no harm meant. Don't get so hot under the collar. It is a common expression for being done out of money. I meant it in that sense only."

"You should choose your language more carefully. It was not justified in any sense. If any one is being done it is my earnest belief that some one has been trying to do my client."

"There is nothing to that at all, Courtney, and we'll show it if there is a hearing. No one is making a fuss but your client. You'll agree with me the Jews are pretty sharp where money is concerned and no offense meant."

"I suppose," I said, "you are acting in this case disinterestedly—a sort of labor of love affair, eh?"

He got up to go.

"Look here, Kidder," I said, "I don't want you to leave this office with those loose and distorted views of yours unchallenged—views that are a discredit to an intelligent American community. You know as well as I do that most everybody nowadays is money mad, and that this madness is not confined to any particular one race or country. The Jews, like everybody else, are trying to get along the best they know how. One may fairly say, without disparaging any

one, that they measure well up to the best standard of our citizenship. They come here freer from any foreign ties than any other class of immigrants. They start right in to make this country their home and the home of their children. They are energetic and show greater aptitude, ability and willingness to build from smaller beginnings than other people. They have helped in a large measure to build up many of our communities. Now do you think it's a fair thing to hold them up as the buga-boo of our civilization?"

"All right, have it your way, Courtney," was Kidder's reply, as he made for the door. "But get me an answer to our proposition as soon as you can, for we want to get this thing closed up."

"Very well," I replied, "I will do the best I can."

After Kidder had gone I sat down and pondered on the turn the affair had taken. Kidder's explanation of the "Chimborazo Company's" attitude in the matter sounded plausible; that they had some one ready and willing to take it at three dollars a share was also possible. Somehow, however, I suspected that the company or its manipulators, rather, had done their best to get those two thousand shares of Morgelefsky's stock without having to pay anything for it, and that did not please me. It was possible, of course, that to avoid the hearing in court the manipulators were now willing to give up six thousand dollars. They evidently feared a hearing in court—an open inquiry into their doings. Why? As things stood I had no doubt that the officers of the Company and perhaps their attorneys were the only ones that could answer that query with any degree of

success. Mr. Kidder was not the kind to advise giving up six thousand dollars to avoid litigation unless there was a very substantial reason for it.

The only sensible thing to do, I decided, was to communicate with Mr. Morgelefsky. This I endeavored to do that same day, but to my great surprice found that he and his family were out of town, and no one knew where they had gone or when they would return. This troubled me very much, for it was a critical time in this case to have him absent. However, there was nothing I could do but wait for some word from him, which I had no doubt would be forthcoming very soon.

Before leaving the office for the day I had dispatched a letter to Messrs. Stone, Black and Forsythe acquainting them with all the particulars of the interview and received their reply by return mail confirming the statement of Eldridge and Young contained in their letter to Kidder, Jones and Wiseman, that any question of settlement with Philip Morgelefsky might be taken up with me directly. They also stated that they had agreed to a transfer of the case to Boston; that they deemed such a course, on account of Mr. Morgelefsky's residence in Boston, as likely to be more convenient for all concerned.

Meantime my quest for Pinchus Prensky had progressed slowly, and so far as my own efforts were concerned they were entirely unavailing and without any appreciable result. I had heard occasionally from Thomas Judkins; he had always hopes of a clew, but nothing tangible or definite, so that as time went on I came to consider any further efforts useless and any hope of success out of question. Nor did I

hear a word from John Brown, and so matters drifted along till June 19th.

On that day Tom came into my office smiling all over.

"Well, Fred," he said, grasping me by the hand, "it's all right. I think I shall have that little affair of ours all solved pretty soon now. Patience, patience," he admonished, with a wave of the hand, as he saw me trying to get in a word edgewise. "I ain't going to tell you a thing more to-day than I already have. 'Tain't ripe, not just yet, but I thought I'd just drop in to let you know that Judkins is on the job all right and that we are going to get there in time."

"But, my dear Tom," I said, "are you sure? To tell you frankly I had given up all hope long ago."

He laughed. "Never give up hope of anything, Fred. Never give up hope. It's all in a lifetime, and if you try long enough you're bound to find what you're looking for; and I'll tell you what—this thing is going to surprise you when you do learn the facts."

"But can't you tell me something about it to-day? You ought to be ashamed of yourself coming in here raising my curiosity that way and then refuse to give me a word of information to relieve my mind. Do I know them?"

He chuckled a merry chuckle and got up to go.

"Nothing more to-day, Fred, nothing more to-day —it might interfere with Justice. But it's all right— it's coming all right sure," and with that and a hearty grip of the hand, he left me more mystified than ever.

On the afternoon of June twentieth Francis Kid-

der called me up on the 'phone again and wanted to know what the prospects were for a settlement on the basis of the six thousand dollar offer.

Without disclosing Mr. Morgelefsky's absence—for I should have advised him likewise if he were present—I told Kidder that we should refuse to accept any such offer.

To my great surprise Kidder said that he was instructed to inform me that if my client would produce his shares within the next twenty-four hours he had a party who would pay the full par value of ten thousand dollars.

There was nothing else for me to do but say that I would endeavor to communicate with Mr. Morgelefsky, and this of course I did.

"All right," said Kidder, "but if he doesn't move quickly this time he will lose his chance," and he hung up.

"Well," I soliloquized, "this is certainly a nice state to be in. An offer of ten thousand dollars in settlement, and it looks like a pretty good offer at that, and no client."

I was about to set on a hunt again for some clew of the Morgelefsky's whereabouts, when two cablegrams were handed to me. In my surprise I fingered them for a moment or two as if looking for an outward explanation of their contents.

I then broke the envelope of one, and withdrew the missive, which read as follows:—

"KINGSTON, JAMAICA, June 20, 19—.

"Everybody safe, coming home.

"JIM."

I opened the other in a sort of daze and read the following:

"KINGSTON, JAMAICA, June 20, 19—.
"Have found her. All safe. Home soon.
"HIRSCH."

"Well," I ejaculated, more mystified than ever, "of all the amazing missives I have ever received these certainly deserve the prize."

CHAPTER XIX

Out of the Shadows

"Wake! For the Sun who scatter'd into flight
The Stars before him from the Field of Night,
Drives Night along with them from Heav'n,
And Strikes
The Sultan's Turret with a Shaft of Light."
—Omar Khayyam.

THE news which the cablegrams conveyed to me was, to say the least, very perplexing. Jim Morgan's "all safe" was undoubtedly meant to include others as well as himself. Starmanow's "have found her" was, no doubt, intended to inform me that he had found the vision of his dreams. It was not at all improbable that Starmanow's visionary hallucinations had transformed some feminine being into the form and beauty of his heart's desire and that the old adage "truth is stranger than fiction" had more than justified itself.

"Well," I mused, "seeing is believing and one's own wish is oftentimes father to the thought."

Imagination bright is ever nigh
To vision of love beyond the sky,
Imagination dull is fancy free,
And never a bit of love can see.

I felt that it would be a happy coincidence, indeed, if Starmanow had succeeded in checkmating his imagination. I could think of no better cure for his ungovernable mania.

How they all came to meet on the Island of Jamaica was certainly a conundrum. Nevertheless there they were and there was nothing for me to do, so far as I could see, but to trust to time and await their return home for the solution of the riddle.

It was almost five o'clock when I left the office. Although the season for the yearly migration to seashore or mountain was at hand we were still at home in Dorchester and it was my intention to take a brisk walk, as I was in the habit of doing before boarding a car. On reaching Tremont street I was attracted by an unusual activity among the newsboys.

"Ex-tra, ex-tra; all about the sheep-wreck—Extra."

I stopped and bought a paper. As I glanced at the front page, bold headlines in heavy black type met my eyes.

"Tragedy at Sea:" I read, "Ocean Liners in Collision." The 'S. S. Admiral Pinto,' Colon to New York, rams her sister ship, the 'S. S. Admiral Paul,' New York to Colon, which sinks into the waters off the Caribbean Sea within an hour of the happening. Kingston, Jamaica." I stared; I was very much astonished. Kingston, Jamaica; "Good Lord," I ejaculated aloud, "the boys must have been in the shipwreck." I folded the paper and rushed to the Boston City Club, where, ensconced in one of the cozy corners of the "silence room," I read a detailed description of the disaster. The two cablegrams were

now explained; the remainder of the enigma I was yet to learn.

Within three or four days of the events last recorded, I was called to the telephone again by Mr. Kidder, who wanted to know if I was ready to make final disposition of the Morgelefsky case, I informed him that my client was still out of town and that I would be unable to do anything definite until his return.

Kidder took my reply in bad grace. He was evidently laboring under the belief that I was, in the common parlance of the street, "stringing him," and was very angry in consequence.

"Very well," he said sharply over the phone, "very well, if that is the stand you are going to take, then I shall offer a motion to dissolve the injunction. The court is about to adjourn for the summer vacation," he went on to tell me, "and we don't intend to be tied up during all that time. I am going to send you a notice at once and have it set down for a speedy hearing," he threatened as he rang off.

For the first time since the commencement of the proceedings against the "Chimborazo Company" I felt troubled and at a loss what to do. The offer of ten thousand dollars made by Kidder for the shares held by my client seemed to be too good to lose; and yet in the absence of Mr. Morgelefsky I was entirely helpless. I was still hoping against hope that he would show up before long and make known his wishes in the matter. Then there was also the possibility of Jim's speedy arrival and he might throw some light on his father's whereabouts.

In due time, I received Kidder's notice in writing

with a copy of the motion which he intended to offer to dissolve the injunction. This still gave me seven days' grace. Nevertheless, even that length of time, ordinarily ample, was not in this instance sufficient for my needs. Not a word had reached me during that time from either Mr. Morgelefsky or Jim. I tried their residence again, but to no avail. It was still closed up.

Monday morning, the date set down for the hearing on the motion, I proceeded to court, bent upon getting a continuance if possible and to contest the dissolution of the injunction in any event.

Still hoping for the momentary arrival of either Jim or his father I left word with Miss Muirhead that if any one called to send them up to court.

I entered the courtroom just after it had opened and the first thing that I noticed as I looked around was Francis Kidder in consultation with my client, John Brown. This was so totally unexpected by me that I was surprised beyond measure. Could I be mistaken? But no, I was sure I would recognize the man anywhere. There could be no doubt. What was he doing in the courtroom then with Kidder? What business had he with him? Was it possible that he was in on this case? All this passed through my mind swiftly. And then suddenly I recalled that the name of the man who discovered the "Chimborazo Mine" was John Brown. Mr. Morgelefsky had said so. I remembered now, that I had noted the coincidence at the time and wondered at it. So, that was how the wind was blowing. Well, it looked as if I might find myself in an awkward situation. On the other hand I could not help smiling at the

ludicrousness of it. Just then Mr. Brown looked up and saw me. His countenance was troubled, I thought, but he smiled and nodded his greetings to me as he left Kidder's side and walked over to where I stood.

"Good morning, Mr. Courtney," he whispered, as we shook hands, "I have just been telling Mr. Kidder that I want this case of the 'Chimborazo Company' postponed. I have had a consultation this morning with Mr. DiSilvera and ——."

Suddenly Brown stopped; the clerk had begun calling the list and I at first thought that that was the reason, but something impelled me to look at him. He was gazing mouth agape—his eyes fixed and round and bulging as if they would burst from their sockets—at some persons who had just entered the courtroom. I followed his gaze and to my great amazement I beheld Morgelefsky Senior, Jim, Miss Morgelefsky and Hirsch Starmanow standing just inside the door and looking about them as if seeking some one. I realized that they were looking for me and was about to go to greet them when Mr. Morgelefsky spied me and started to come towards me when his glance rested on Mr. Brown. Mr. Morgelefsky hesitated and then stopped short. He lifted his arm as if to shield himself and his lips began to move, though not a sound escaped him that I could hear.

"Pinchus, Pinchus," suddenly cried Brown in a most unearthly voice, tottering towards Morgelefsky. "Oh Pinchus," and before I actually realized what was happening the two men had fallen into each other's arms and were holding each other in strong

embrace.

Pandemonium reigned in the courtroom for a while. The clerk had stopped in the calling of the list. The Marshal was hammering his desk and calling for order. The kindly Judge, realizing that something out of the ordinary had happened, looked on the scene about him with indulgence. Several deputy marshals, as well as Miss Morgelefsky, Hirsch, Jim and I, rushed towards the pair. The officers separated the men and led them into the corridor, where we followed. In passing out I whispered to Kidder, who was near by, to continue the hearing and that I would telephone him later in the day, to which he assented with a brusque "all right."

"This way," I called, as soon as I got into the corridor, leading the way to one of the consultation rooms.

In this room after we were all assembled and the doors closed, I first hastily greeted the new arrivals and then bidding them all be seated I turned to Mr. Brown and I invited him to explain what it all meant. But Brown turned to Morgelefsky instead. "Pinchus," he said, addressing Morgelefsky in a tremulous voice, "Pinchus, where is my wife and child?"

"I don't know, Yankel, I don't know," murmured Morgelefsky. "As God is my witness, I don't know."

"You don't know?" demanded Brown, "you don't know, but they went with you; the last I saw of them they were going with you."

"Yes, and so it was," replied Morgelefsky, "but after crossing the border and seeing that you were lost your wife refused to go further with me. She

wouldn't go to America, she said. She wept and carried on and said she would go to Jerusalem to die, and so, taking the boy with her, she parted from us at Königsberg and I never saw or heard from her from that day to this."

Brown listened to these words of Morgelefsky's as one listens to a sentence of death. He bowed his head grief-stricken and tears were slowly coursing down his cheeks.

"Ah, well," he moaned at last, "I have nothing left; nothing more to live for. It's all ended. I don't care now what they do or what happens."

"Mr. Brown," I urged sympathetically, "I wish you would tell me your whole story. I am beginning to understand a portion of it. I should like to know it all. Perhaps I may be able to help you after all."

"No, no," he replied. "No one can help me now; no one."

"Don't say that," I urged, "one can never tell, and anyway it may relieve the terrible strain you are laboring under."

"Well," he said, looking about him brokenheartedly and undecided, "maybe you are right. There is nothing any more to fear. Nothing worse can happen. All my hopes are lost."

"Let me hear what the trouble is," I begged again.

"It is more than twenty years now since the trouble began," he said; "it was in the eighties. I was in my home then in Drushnishok, and Pinchus here, who is my countryman, he lived in the same town. We were both born there and went to the same school and we grew up together good friends. Later,

we married—Pinchus, he married after me and we lived very happy.

"In the year when the trouble happened it was Passover time—April, I think. We had heard of Pogroms taking place in many cities and towns far and near, but in our town everything was quiet—like the quiet before a storm, and we trembled, and sure enough with the Passover—Good Friday, the storm broke. The Jewish people hid in cellars and in the roofs of houses, particularly the women and children, while many of us men who could defend our homes, did so the best way we could. Many of the men were killed and the women dragged forth and violated, oh, God! what a time it was; I will never forget the horrors of it to my dying day. It was so terrible that I cannot find words to describe it. For three days it went on without a letup. We didn't even dare to go forth to bury our dead. On the night of the third day I stole away from the house and went to a Christian friend named Druzkin—he was a very good man, this Druzkin. He didn't take part in the murder and pillage with the others and I prevailed on him to take me and Pinchus and our families away from the horrors about us and across the border into Prussia. We were not very far from the border line. Druzkin agreed to do this. Late that night he came with a covered wagon into which we all got in and we managed to escape from the town.

"It was early morning when we arrived at a lonely spot on the border; there was a river to cross. We all got out and bidding Druzkin a tearful farewell, we made for the river. Unfortunately just then

some gendarmes rushed upon the scene; we didn't even see where they came from. I handed my boy to my wife and pushing her forward into the water, which was shallow, I cried to her and Pinchus and his family to run and escape, while I turned about and swinging my stick tried to pick a quarrel with our pursuers in order to give the others time to get across the river. Druzkin rushed to my assistance and between us we gave the officers so much trouble that the folks all escaped but myself, and in the mêlée Druzkin was killed and I severely injured. In my wounded state I was taken to a near-by city, where I was held charged with the murder of Druzkin. I was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to Siberia for life.

"The tortures and suffering that I underwent in the Siberian Mines are indescribable. But I lived through it all. The vision of my dear wife and child was with me day and night and buoyed me up in the hope that some day I would escape and find them.

"The chance came at last. I escaped, and made my way to Vladivostok. Here, fortunately, I found an American sailing vessel and by signs and tears I prevailed upon them to take me aboard. They hid me in the hold until they sailed and after that I worked my passage with them to Alaska. I did not reveal my name, for I knew enough that being charged with murder I would be returned to Russia if caught. So they called me John and later on John Brown, and I have borne that name ever since.

"From Alaska I sailed to San Francisco and desiring to get away as far as possible from the beaten tracks of man, until I would be forgotten and con-

sidered dead, I sailed further south, landing at Guayaquil and then going into the interior of Ecuador.

"Here it was, while working as a laborer on the railroad they were building, that I discovered what is now known as the 'Chimborazo Mine.' I went to New York, got acquainted with Mr. DiSilvera, who was speculating in various undertakings of that kind, and the company was formed.

"As soon as I could after arriving in New York, I commenced a search for my friend Pinchus in the hope of finding him I would find my dear ones. But now, now all my hopes are gone, gone forever," and the old man bent his head and buried his face in his hands.

Starmanow had listened attentively as we all did to Mr. Brown's narrative. He now fidgeted in his chair, got up and sat down again as if he didn't know what to do.

"Mr.—Mr. Brown," he said at last in a husky voice which surprised me, "Mr. Brown, pardon me, Sir, but will you tell me the name of your wife, please?"

Brown looked up and gazed at Hirsch steadily for a moment.

"Yes," he said. "Yes, her name was 'Rifka.' "

Starmanow rose to his feet again slowly, his whole body a-tremble. I had never seen him act that way before and I instinctively also rose as if to go to his assistance.

"And—and was the boy's name Hirsch?" he asked again hoarsely, holding on to a chair as if for support.

"Yes—yes, his name was Hirsch," said Brown, his

eyes taking fire and trembling in turn.

"I—I am the Hirsch," gasped Starmanow. "I am Hirsch. Oh, father, father, I am your son, Hirsch."

The old man rose to his feet, he shook as if with ague. He gasped, choked and tried to speak and then with a terrible groan fell senseless into the outstretched arms of his son.

CHAPTER XX

Home Again

The pole of my tent has greater worth
Than castle's golden dome,
For it stands upon that spot of earth
The place I call my home.

WE experienced some difficulty in reviving Mr. Brown. For a time I was fearful lest the shock of Starmanow's sudden declaration had killed him. Jim was hurriedly despatched for a doctor, while the rest of us frantically did all we could for the stricken man and worked over him until the spark of life returned and he opened his eyes. Hirsch looked as if this time, at least, he had actually gazed upon a real live ghost.

The arrival of the doctor and the administration of bromide soon had Mr. Brown sitting up and taking notice again. Hirsch gave all his attention to his father, whose eyes, with the return of animation, followed every movement of his son. It was easily seen that Mr. Brown was still in a daze,—that he still scarcely believed,—that he was endeavoring to adjust his senses. The suddenness of transition from black despair—from the loss of all hope to the vista of happiness which Hirsch's declaration opened out to him—seemed almost too much to grasp. To him

Hirsch seemed suddenly to have risen from the dead.

"It's all right, father—it's all right," Hirsch kept saying reassuringly. "It's all right, don't you worry. Now that we've got each other again everything will be fine," and he patted his father on the shoulder and caressed his hands. "I only wish mother were here, father," he added, brokenly. "I only wish she had lived to see this day and was here with us now."

Miss Morgelefsky was in tears; Jim was hiding behind the doctor's back and as for myself I must own frankly that for a time I felt very uncomfortable.

"I want you both to come home with me," spoke up Mr. Morgelefsky. "Ida is there, Yankel—Ida Chaichi—my Chaichi—my wife, you remember, Yankel, don't you? She is waiting home for me and I want you and Hirsch to come with me. She will be glad to see you, Yankel; oh, how glad she will be," he added, brokenly, as Mr. Brown nodded affirmatively. "Yes, she will be glad. We had all given you up for dead that time; we never expected to see you alive again.

"This is the Zwilling—the twins," pursued Morgelefsky, motioning to Miss Ruth and Jim. "My babies, you remember them, Yankel? Yudki and Russeli; they were less than six months old." He sighed. "And this is your Hirschki, who should think it was him? He was about eight years then, wasn't he?"

"No, I should have never known him," continued Morgelefsky. "Jim, my son, call a taxicab and telephone your mother we are coming. Yes, Yankel, I'll never forget the day when I last saw your Hirschki

with his dear mother 'Haleo Asholem' your Rifkela. It was in the wagsall—the railroad station in Königsberg. I was begging her to come with us. But no, she would not; nothing that I or my Chaichi could say would change her. She said she didn't care for the world any more; she would take her boy to Jerusalem. Many were going there just then—so she would be sure she could bring him up as a good Jew. Without his father she was afraid she might lose him altogether in America—lose him as a Jew, you know. Many said that the Jew in America wasn't quite up to their religion. Well, so we had to part—there was no help for it. We were standing just by the train crying—who could help crying that day? Our hearts were broken—and we were saying goodbye when your little Hirsch, he just went over to my wife and took the baby Russeli from her arms and he hugged and kissed her. When your Rifkela saw that she broke down altogether and I thought she would change her mind and come with us, but no, she didn't, and so when the train was starting to go we had to go too and leave her and the boy behind. Ah, it was a sorry day, that," sighed Morgelefsky.

Miss Ruth had colored to the roots of her hair at her father's last remarks. I was about to make conversation to change the subject when just then Jim returned and announced that he had a touring car waiting for them; so we all followed him to the elevator and down stairs.

Both Mr. Brown and Mr. Morgelefsky assured me as I saw them off that I would hear from them very soon again.

On my way to the office I was still greatly troubled by many things in connection with the case. It was quite clear, of course, how and why Yankel Starmanow came to be John Brown, but I couldn't quite see as yet how or why Pinchus Prensky became Philip Morgelefsky. I decided to ask Mr. Morgelefsky about it at our next interview. Then there was the question of the mine and the shares and Kidder's offer. In the excitement of the morning I hadn't learned a thing and was no whit wiser now than I was before. Well, I could call up the Morgelefskys later in the day and have Jim come in and see me. I could explain to him how matters stood and have him arrange for an early interview between all parties. Then there was DiSilvera, a new figure in the mine affair. It looked now as if he had more than a little to do with it.

On my arrival at the office who should I find waiting for me but Tom Judkins.

"Hello, Fred," he greeted affably, "been waiting for you quite a while; got some news for you."

I looked at him sharply, rather amused. I wondered if by any chance he had hit upon the truth.

"Sit down, Tom," I invited, "and let's hear what it is."

"I have found the man you are looking for."

"You mean Pinchus Prensky?"

"Sure; that was the man I was to find for you, wasn't it?"

"Yes," I replied, "but I found him some two hours ago, Tom."

Tom Judkins stared at me open mouthed.

"But that won't make any difference as far as

your time is concerned," I said, reassuringly. "Let me have your bill as soon as it's ready."

"That's all right, Fred," rejoined Judkins. "How did you find out?"

I told him.

"Well," he commented, "I didn't figure they'd both be in court this morning and recognize each other. I knew they would be in to see you sooner or later. But, Fred," he added, "you ain't got the whole story yet."

"No; how is that?"

"Well, it's a sort of a mixup. You know of the letter—the two dollar assessment gag sent out by the 'Chimborazo Company?' "

I nodded.

"Well, some of the stockholders," pursued Judkins, "kind of suspected it was a frame-up; that either the original letter offering the stock or the letter calling for the assessment was a fraud and they put it up to the Postal authorities. You see they thought if they could get the government to get the gang on a charge of using the mails to defraud, it would bring the whole matter to a quick issue. The inspectors got right on the job and later on called me in to assist. It was a short while after I had my talk with you at the house.

"Well, my part of the work was to locate the various stockholders, interview them on how they got the stock, or what means, if any, were used to induce them to make the purchase—in short, to find out how many were victimized. Pretty soon I learned about your case from Morgelefsky. But that was a matter that would keep, I figured, so I

kept on looking elsewhere.

"Well, one day I met an old Hebrew who had a few shares of stock. He got his'n on the market, so he didn't interest me much, but as an afterthought I says to him, I says, 'Say, you know a lot of your people about here, maybe you know a Hebrew named Prensky, comes from a place called Drashnishok.' "

"Sure," he said, "I know him, but he don't go by that name now."

"No," I said, "why not?"

"Nothing much," he replied, "he is a pretty nice man all right, but he had some trouble in Russia and so he dropped his own name and took his wife's. She was a Morgelefsky. I knew them pretty well. They come from my town."

"So his name is Morgelefsky now."

"Yes," he said, "Philip Morgelefsky."

"Philip Morgelefsky!" I exclaimed, very much surprised; you see it looked to me as if it was the same party as you had the case on against the company.

"Well, I made further inquiries and sure enough it was both one and the same party. I suppose you will ask why didn't I come at once and tell you all about it?"

"Sure," I replied, "why didn't you, Tom?"

"Well, I did come, you remember, but I didn't quite like to tell you."

"Why?"

He smiled.

"Well, first place, as far as I could see you was the lawyer for both parties; that is, the lawyer for the man who was looking for Prensky and also the

lawyer for Morgelefsky, alias Prensky, who was looking for his rights in the 'Chimborazo Company.' Well, not knowing what your first client was up to I didn't want to complicate matters by putting you wise before the government had had a chance to have your client Morgelefsky testify in the 'Chimborazo Company' case."

"Oh."

"Sure."

"Well then why are you here now?"

"That's another matter. You see," he went on to explain, "in tracing the officials of the company we located their leader, Leon DiSilvera, here in Boston. As a matter of fact it looks as if this chap crooked the whole thing up—I mean the assessment business to freeze out the minority stockholders."

"Ah!" I broke in, "I thought so."

"Well, the inspectors," continued Tom, "have been keeping a close watch on DiSilvera for some time and they have good reason to believe that they have the goods on him, but the thing that they wanted to make sure about was the conditions at the mine. Well, they got the Consular Department working on that and they were waiting for a report when they got word that the Superintendent of the mine, a mining engineer by the name of John Brown, was on his way to Boston and I was assigned to see him and find out what he knew. So I laid low to see what this fellow would do.

"We've had a stool pigeon at DiSilvera's office for some time and we learned that this man Brown had had a devil of a row yesterday with DiSilvera to straighten this thing out or he would take things in

his own hands and do it. DiSilvera promised to give him an answer to-morrow—that is this morning. Well, so last night I drops in to see Mr. Brown at his hotel and I get the whole story from him. And I can tell you now, Fred, that your client Morgelefsky isn't likely to lose a penny on his shares. But what do you think happened before I left him?"

"I haven't the least idea, Tom," I said, shaking my head.

"Why, he says, says he to me just as I was about to go, 'You are what they call a detective, ain't you?' "

"Well," I says, "they used to call me that, I don't do very much in that line now."

"Well," says he, "but you must have been a long time at it, wasn't you?"

"Yes," I replied, "pretty near thirty years."

"Well," he says, "may be you have come across a man named Pinchus Prensky, in your time."

"Well, Fred, you could have knocked me down with a feather when he asks me that, I was so taken by surprise."

"I don't," I says to him. "Been looking long for him?"

"Yes," he says, "a long, long time."

"I kind of chewed it over for awhile and then I says, 'I'd advise you to go and see a lawyer named Frederick W. Courtney, a friend of mine, and perhaps he can help,' and I was going to give him your address when he cuts me short with, 'Oh, I know Mr. Courtney; he is trying to help me find him now, but I thought,' says he, 'maybe as how you'd know.' "

"Well, sir, I left him feeling sure that he was

your other client, and that I had no reason to hold back now, so I thought I'd drop in and let you know how it was when you went and got the news in ahead of me."

"Tom," I said, "you've earned your money. I think you've done an excellent job. What are they going to do with DiSilvera?"

"Well, after I had informed the authorities of the outcome of my interview with Mr. Brown they decided to arrest DiSilvera, but when they got to his office at ten o'clock they couldn't find him. They are looking for him now."

"Tom," I said, as Judkins rose to go, "don't forget to let me know of any new developments in this case. I am interested to know everything that may take place."

This he promised to do.

About two o'clock Kidder telephoned me that he had discontinued the motion to dissolve the injunction, and that he had withdrawn from the case. This was news indeed, and looked serious for the officials of the company. I felt confident, though, from what Tom Judkins had said that Mr. Brown was not in any way implicated.

About four o'clock Jim telephoned to ask if I would come over to his father's house that evening as both Mr. Brown and his father felt that there were some matters about which they wanted to speak to me at once, but that Mr. Brown was still too ill to come to my office.

I readily agreed to do this, and arrived at the Morgelefsky residence about eight o'clock.

"Well, Jim, how does it feel to be home again?"

I inquired, as that young man opened the door for me and we shook hands.

"Fine, fine, Mr. Courtney," he replied; "there is no place like home, Mr. Courtney, no matter where one goes, and it looked once or twice as though I would never see home again."

"Well, well, all is well that ends will," I consoled. "I was certainly rejoiced to see you back safe and sound."

Mr. and Mrs. Morgelefsky came forward to greet me, and the little lady was all smiles and bustle as she escorted me to the parlor.

"My, my, I am so very glad you came, so very, very glad. And how is Mrs. Courtney and the boy? And why didn't you bring them along, Mr. Courtney? Well, you must, you really must next time."

As I was ushered into the parlor it reminded me very much of the evening of Minnie's engagement, for there she was, and Mr. Youngerman, too, both rising to greet me.

"Are congratulations in order?" I asked, with a smile.

"No," laughed Minnie in reply, "not yet."

And in came Jean—all smiles, with bright, joyous laughing eyes, walking—I should have said rather gliding—as if on air.

I caught Jim's eye and we both laughed. The young rascal, I could certainly see how the wind blew in that direction.

After greetings were over we all assembled in the library, where Mr. Brown was propped up on a davenport and hovered over by both Hirsch and Ruth. I recalled Hirsch's cable as I watched the pair and

I really could not blame him for believing that he had found his vision at last. Ruth's subdued happiness could not be mistaken.

Slowly Mr. Brown related to me his connection with the "Chimborazo Mine," and the untold wealth that it contained. He related how for more than a year he had been fighting what he thought were the unreasonable actions of DiSilvera and his associates. He didn't suspect them of fraud, but their insistence of accumulating gold at the mine which laid it open to raids was what he couldn't understand, but which was now very plain to him. He ended up by requesting me to call an immediate meeting of all the stockholders, that the true state of affairs might be made known to them and proper action taken to protect the mine.

It must have been about ten o'clock and I was about making ready to go when the door bell rang, and Jim came in to say that a gentleman was in the reception hall waiting to see me.

I stepped out, and, to my great surprise, found that it was Tom Judkins.

"Hello, Tom," I exclaimed, "what brings you here?"

"I called at your home," he replied, "and Mrs. Courtney told me you were here. I thought perhaps you'd be interested to know this at once. The officers who had been honeycombing the city for DiSilvera all day located him about an hour ago in a room at one of the hotels. Not receiving any reply to their repeated knockings they broke in the door and found him lying on the floor dead as a door nail with a bullet hole through his head."

CHAPTER XXI

Vision's Dream Realized

A goldsmith stood by his anvil bold,
Ding dong, ding dong ding;
He hammered away on a piece of gold,
Ding dong, ding dong ding.
The gold replied with a sing song sing,
As it took the shape of a beautiful thing,
For the goldsmith was shaping a wedding ring,
Ding dong, ding dong ding.

THE affairs of the "Chimborazo Gold Mining and Metals Company" took a new impetus after the death of Leon DiSilvera. At a meeting of the stockholders held soon after the events last recorded both John Brown (who had taken legal process to retain his assumed name) and Philip Morgelefsky were both elected directors of the company. And on the same day the Board of Directors elected Mr. Brown President and General Manager of the company. The two dollar assessment was cancelled and James Morgan placed in general charge of the affairs at the mine. This necessitated another trip to the mine, which Jim and Mr. Brown undertook together. All the mine ore available was shipped to New York and Boston, and, as was to be expected, the shares of the company jumped to ex-

traordinary value on the market.

Meantime the summer had passed and winter had come and was almost gone. The wedding of Minnie Morgelefsky and Harry Youngerman was a private affair, solemnized in New York very soon after Jim's return to Boston. Unfortunately although Ethel and I were invited, Billy's health and the stress of business at the time made it impossible for us to attend.

In the early part of March we received an invitation to attend the wedding of Miss Ruth Morgelefsy to Mr. Hirsch Starmanow. We hadn't seen much of either of them lately, and we were delighted with the news and made preparations to attend.

It was a little after six o'clock on the evening of March twenty-ninth when Ethel and I arrived at the synagogue to attend the wedding. We had been somewhat delayed in starting, so that I was in great fear as to whether or not we would reach there in time for the ceremony, the invitation having set the time for six o'clock.

I was pleased to find that we were not late. When we entered the reception parlor to remove our wraps there was not a sign of the bridal party, and I understood from what conversation I overheard that they had not as yet arrived. It was the first time I had ever been in a Jewish synagogue, and was about to check my hat with my coat and Ethel's wraps when I felt a touch on my arm, and, on turning to see who it was, found myself face to face with Mr. Magid, the sexton.

"Excuse me, Mr. Courtney," he said, "I suppose you will be going into the synagogue to see the

'Hupa,' the ceremony?"

"Of course," I retorted somewhat surprised at the question. "That's what we are here for."

"All right, sir; that's what I thought. Then you will please be so good as not to check your hat. You will need it later." Then, as he saw my continued look of astonishment, he added, "this is an orthodox congregation, so we wear our hats in the synagogue, see? I hope you don't mind."

"Oh," I said, withholding my hat from the checker, "I understand." Then as we stepped back from the checking window I added, "No, I don't mind in the least. If it is your custom or law why should I mind, and besides you are not the only people who wear their hats on important occasions. Take the British Parliament for instance. Its members are obliged to wear their hats when attending a session. In fact, I believe that no member is permitted to enter either Parliamentary house with his hat off. Then there are certain monarchies, if not all, whose rulers wear their hats on state occasions. The King of Spain receives his courtiers with his hat on, and only those of the highest nobility, the Hidalgoes, are permitted to wear their hats in the presence of the King."

Mr. Magid smiled appreciatively at what I told him. "I am glad you don't mind," he said. "I suppose you have never witnessed a Jewish wedding before."

"No, I have not," I confessed.

"Wait a minute," he said. "I will be back right away."

Presently he returned and came over where Ethel

and I were watching the newcomers.

"Here," he said, "is a Manual," waving a small prayer book he held in his hand. "The marriage service is on page fifteen," he added, opening the book and pointing to the page. "One side is Hebrew and the other is English. Take it; you can follow the service pretty well with that."

I gladly took the book and thanked him for his kindness.

"Now," he said "if you will please come with me I will show you to some good seats; they will all be here soon."

Ethel and I followed Mr. Magid into the synagogue proper. There was quite a congregation present; the lights, which were still dim, gave the place a subdued appearance. Mr. Magid showed us to seats to the left of the centre aisle which gave us a splendid view of the pulpit and sanctuary.

I again thanked him for his very courteous attentions, and he, with a kindly nod and a "you're welcome, my dear sir," rushed away to busy himself with the duties before him.

I gazed about me interestedly. The interior of the synagogue, which consisted of the main floor and a balcony supported by marble columns, was fairly large. The furnishings were in the main very simple; the only fresco to be seen was that of the vaulted ceiling, which depicted the heavenly firmament, including the sun, moon and stars; from the centre of this was suspended an immense chandelier with innumerable lights. The only piece of Mosaic was the large window over the balcony at the front entrance to the synagogue.

The place as a whole, nevertheless, was pervaded by an atmosphere of solemnity that held me mystified and enchanted. This feeling was greatly intensified by the appearance of the pulpit and sanctuary, from which I could not tear my gaze. They were so different from anything I had ever seen before.

The pulpit stood about two-thirds distant up the centre aisle and midway between parallel lines of pews that reached to the farthest wall and the dais of the sanctuary. The pulpit was sort of a square platform which was reached by two short stairways on either side. A railing of perhaps three feet in height encompassed the platform, excepting at the entrance to it; each of its four angles held a candelabra containing seven candles. A large reading desk tastily covered stood within the enclosure facing the sanctuary, and a preacher's reading pedestal faced the congregation. Within the pulpit was a large, square open space, and a small, narrow space intervened between pulpit and sanctuary. Within an embrasure of the upper wall, perhaps fifteen feet wide, upon a raised dais to correspond in height with that of the pulpit, was the sanctuary.

The Ark of the Covenant stood within the sanctuary, resting upon two massive lions in marble. It was draped with a white satin gilt-embossed curtain. A perpetual light burnt at its head and two lions in tinted plaster of paris stood above, bearing aloft between them the tables of the law, with an abbreviation of the Ten Commandments cut in Hebrew characters. Above all this were two hands, palms outward and touching each other in extended form by thumb and forefinger; each hand formed the letter

V by a division of its fingers; the same, I was told, as praticed by the priests in the temple when blessing the children of Israel, a custom still in vogue in many of the orthodox congregations.

The entire interior of the synagogue seemed to have been turned into an arbor for the occasion. Plants, ferns and shrubs formed the chief decoration, and were artistically arranged leading up to the approaches to pulpit and sanctuary. The pulpit enclosure as well as its candelabras was entwined with evergreen and cut flowers, giving the pulpit the appearance of a lovers' bower, such as one might dream about or find described in a fairy story. There was no organ, but appropriate selections were rendered by an orchestra stationed in the balcony.

Above the pulpit, suspended from four poles, was a large cardinal canopy. And, entwined around the supports and the edges of the canopy were garlands with multi-colored electric bulbs peeping out from the evergreen and flowers and presenting a most enchanting picture.

The immense chandelier in the centre of the synagogue shot forth into light, flooding the place with its powerful rays.

Presently the Rabbi and Cantor entered by the sanctuary door, and, walking side by side, descended the dais, ascended the pulpit and stationed themselves under the canopy facing the congregation. They were followed by a choir consisting of ten men and boys and a leader, who, entering by the side door, ascended the pulpit and formed themselves in a semi-circle around the canopy and facing Rabbi and Cantor, but leaving the entrances on either side un-

obstructed.

The orchestra burst forth into the strains of Lohengrin's wedding march.

Then came six young men attired in evening dress and tall silk hats entering by a door at the extreme right of the sanctuary and six young ladies dressed in white entering by a door at its extreme left, each set carrying a long rope of twisted evergreen entwined with roses. They ranged themselves to the right and left of the centre aisle, completing a very pretty avenue of approach.

A hush fell upon the congregation. The door at the extreme right of the sanctuary opened, admitting Hirsch Sarmanow, escorted by his father. They marched to the pulpit and stationed themselves facing the Rabbi and Cantor. By the glare of the intense light Hirsch appeared to be slightly pale, but his features were passive and tranquil and his bearing dignified.

Shortly after came a little girl bearing a huge basket of flowers, and then Ruth, all in white, angelic, sweet, demure, a vision of loveliness; an inspiration that a Raphael or some other great master may have gloried in, supported on either side by her father and mother, and followed by Mr. and Mrs. Youngerman, Jim and Jean and a concourse of relatives walking in couples. They marched down the right aisle and, turning, came up the centre aisle, flanked on either side by the ushers and bridesmaids with their ropes of evergreen and roses and kindly smiles, and up to the pulpit, where the bride, after circling three times around the bridegroom, took her place at his side, surrounded by their intimate relatives,

while the other members of the escort filed into seats reserved for them near the pulpit.

The orchestra ceased. "Mi Adir," chanted the Cantor, "May He who ruleth over all bless the bride and bridegroom." This was taken up by the choir, rendering the verse in most inspiring oriental melody.

The Cantor then chanted some blessings over a goblet of wine which he held in his right hand and from which thereafter the bride and groom each took a sip.

Ruth, assisted by one of the bridesmaids, removed the glove of her right hand, and Hirsch, while placing the plain gold band ring upon its forefinger, repeated after the Rabbi first in Hebrew and then in English the words:

"Behold, thou art consecrated unto me by this ring according to the laws of Moses and Israel."

"My dear bride and bridegroom," said the Rabbi, after reading in Hebrew the marriage contract according to ancient Hebrew custom, "may God's blessing be upon you. Man was not intended to live alone; nor woman. They were designed for each other, to carry out the purposes of the Supreme Being—that man, created in His Own Image, shall propagate and continue to inhabit this earth which He has allotted to him. In carrying out this immutable law set down by the great God, man and woman have each their duties to perform. These duties in their performance may become a blessing or a curse; a pleasure or a burden; filled with love and happiness, or with hatred and resentment. This depends entirely upon the disposition, the good judg-

ment, the forbearance at times of the two young people entering upon the marriage state.

"It is the duty of the husband to provide the wherewithal for the maintenance of the household, to shield and to protect the home; it is the duty of the woman to give her love and affection unrestrainedly and unreservedly to the man whom she hath given her hand and to live within the means of his earning capacity. The gravest danger to family life and society to-day are the expectations which are often in excess of the earning capacity of the husband and the envy within the heart of the wife of the women who have been better favored. You are joined together to travel life's path in unison. Be true and loyal helpmates to each other; be considerate, sympathetic, compassionate. Speak with love ever, with anger never. If angry thoughts come to either of you, leave them unspoken till to-morrow. A thoughtless word uttered unthinkingly may sometimes be beyond recall, never to be forgotten—to embitter life.

"The marriage state is the most sacred of all human ties; it should be entered upon with the thought and hope that it will last as long as life itself. To those whose hearts and minds and wills are directed that way it will ever remain so. Let no man put asunder that which God in His wisdom has joined together.

"The Jewish home has ever been the fountain of religion, of morality, chastity, charity, benevolence; upon the wife and the mother depends all of this now. Your home will be that which you make it; the children are like unto their parents. The fruit

showeth the tree that bears it."

The Rabbi paused for a moment and then continued: "Of you, my dear bridegroom, we have heard with great satisfaction reports of an ideal character, of a gentlemanly nature, kindly disposition and manly qualities which lead us to believe that this girl's future is well intrusted to your care. Cherish her as thou wouldst the apple of thine eye. Love, not man, is the master."

Blessings were now again chanted by the Cantor over a goblet of wine from which the bride and groom sipped once more.

A small wineglass was placed upon the pulpit floor, which the bridegroom crushed with the heel of the right foot. The past is shattered even as the glass before them and a new life begins.

"Mazol Touve," said the Rabbi and Cantor. "Mazol Touve," responded choir and congregation. "Mazol Touve," said everybody to each other.

The orchestra struck up a livelier air. "Hosen Kalo Mazol Touve." The bride was enfolded in her mother's arms and they kissed and wept a little together, and then came the father, and Mr. Brown, and Minnie and Mr. Youngerman, and Jim and Jean. Hirsch was fondled and kissed too, while the congregation stood waiting expectantly.

Presently Hirsch, with Ruth, his wife, leaning on his arm, descended the pulpit steps. The bride's veil was thrown back. The eyes of bride and groom glistened with traces of recent tears, but they also beamed with happiness. They threw answering, radiant smiles at their friends. They wended their way to the reception parlor, to be followed presently

by their relatives and guests, there to receive their congratulations and felicitations. As they passed us they met our friendly glance with a look of extreme happiness.

I felt a slight tugging at my arm and glanced down into the sweet, sympathetic eyes of my own dear love, my Ethel.

"Fred, dear," she whispered, "they look very happy, Ruth and Hirsch, don't they?"

"Of course they do, you darling," I replied, "and well they might be, for, like you and I, dear, they have realized the vision of their dreams."

EPILOGUE

SOME years later—to be exact, on the twenty-eighth day of August, 1915, I came down to breakfast and picked up my morning paper as usual to see what the news was.

Many things had happened since that day when Hirsch Starmanow and Ruth Morgelefsky became husband and wife. For one thing, there was a newcomer—little Ruby Starmanow—who gave promise of outshining her pretty mother in time. Vivacious Jean Miller had become Mrs. James Morgan, and cutting quite a figure socially. And very many other things had happened, some of which were making history—sorry history at that.

Most all the peoples of the so-called civilized nations had entered the lists to destroy each other—all excepting the people of the United States—blessed land. I had never realized until this crisis in the world's history had been reached how good it was to be an American—an American of the United States. How wonderful it was to be a part of this nation—this new civilization, where the peoples of nearly all the known races, creeds and nationalities have joined hands and hearts to live in amity—to build one mighty nation founded on justice and equal rights, the like of which had never before been known.

To glance at my morning paper was a daily habit,

yet I dreaded it of late. It was all war—war—war, and there was some danger to our amicable relations with Germany at the time. There was also the Convention of Governors then being held in Boston, and that promised to be of some interest. Sure enough, the first headline that my eyes lighted upon was "Germany will settle in full. Ready not only to apologize and pay indemnity on Arabic, but give satisfaction in Lusitania cases."

"Well, thank goodness," I soliloquized, "danger over in that direction for the present, anyway."

"Governors to Work For Powerful Army," was the next thing I read, "Are Unanimous for Greater Forces on Land and Sea, More State Troops and General Preparedness." That was it: Preparedness and Peace, that should be the watchword.

"Model City A Pilgrim Memorial," I read further.

"Hello, Ethel," I exclaimed, addressing Mrs. Courtney, who was sitting opposite to me at the table, "it looks as though Hirsch Starmanow and his vision are likely to have a chance to dwell in the 'Model City' of his dream after all."

Ethel looked up with a surprised smile.

"What is the riddle this morning, Fred, dear?"

"No joking," I assured her, "this is the real thing. Listen to this! I'll read it to you."

"Model City A Pilgrim Memorial," I read aloud. "Plan Permanent Home for 100,000 on Bay Near Boston."

One of the principal speakers announced at the Governor's Clambake last night that it is proposed to build as a permanent commemoration of the land-

ing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth a model city, where 100,000 people will live permanently.

This model city will be built, if the plans mature, for the celebration of the 300th anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims in 1920.

It is proposed to build this model city on Massachusetts Bay—a city that shall be the model city of the world, predicted from ancient times. It is to be a permanent city, fire-proof, smoke-proof, germ-proof, slum-proof, the acme of efficiency, economy and evolution, a city reaping the benefit of the mistakes of the past. A tract of 50,000 acres will be occupied by the city.

Plans and specifications for the city are now being considered by eminent experts in law, architecture and engineering.

The announcement in full was as follows:

"I am requested to make an announcement concerning a part of the proposed preparation for the celebration of the 300th anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth.

"In 1920 the 300th anniversary is to be celebrated by Massachusetts and New England.

"Because of the unique position Massachusetts has held in history, because Massachusetts is what she is, the character of any national celebration under the auspices of the Commonwealth has constituted an engaging problem to many of its citizens. The celebration, of course, must be adequate, popular, dignified and altogether worthy of the traditions of this great Commonwealth—worthy of the whole of New England and of the nation.

"The expenditure of money must not be wasted,

but must be adequate to procure not a transitory collection of buildings of no use after the exposition has been held, entailing the immense loss that has been suffered in every one of the great international expositions given in this country.

"It has been definitely determined by some of the citizens of this Commonwealth that the commemoration of 1920 shall evolve itself into a memorial which shall signalize permanently the landing on these shores of the Pilgrims, the forerunners of the birth of the nation, the creators of the beginning of a new government, the starting of the development of a new order of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, of art, industry and literature.

"These citizens believe that the solution of the problem was reached when plans and specifications of inspiring genius and scope were laid down for the building and administration of a model city on the shores of Massachusetts Bay.

"These citizens propose that the city to be built shall be the model city of the world, which the prophets from the most ancient times have predicted, and they propose that the project shall be inspiring because of its proportions, perspective and potentialities.

"They propose a permanent city, not a passing exposition, thus eliminating the waste of enormous amounts of money in buildings built for a day, a fitting monument to the spirit typified by Pilgrim Rock, a city fire-proof, smoke-proof, germ-proof, slum-proof, abolishing obstacles to efficiency, economy and evolution, a city composed of zones for manufactories, industries, and warehouses;

wholesale and retail shopping; amusements, theatres, etc.; libraries, churches, schools, residences; and that the city shall be supported by saving what other cities waste.

"That all the public utilities, including the lighting, transportation and heating, shall be controlled by the people who use the revenues they themselves create.

"That the city shall have a harbor front owned and controlled by the city, with piers, wharves, warehouses, terminals, procured by concessions paying into the city treasury vast incomes.

"That in the city all transportation be by subways, both for passengers and freight.

"That the construction of the city be the last word in architecture, sanitation, schools, parks, playgrounds, safe amusements for a sane people.

"That the government of the city be housed in a municipal centre and administered by the business men after the fashion of real business.

"It is proposed that the city shall be ready in 1920 for a population of 100,000 with sufficient territory and layout to grow to a city of 1,000,000.

"The area of the city shall be about 50,000 acres. Its location on the shores of Massachusetts Bay, near to the city of Boston, upon a great water front now undeveloped but from location a natural port.

"The plans and the specifications for this new city are even now being considered by eminent experts in law, architecture and engineering.

"The city shall have an international aspect—a world centre—where foreign governments shall have permanent buildings for the dissemination of

world knowledge."

"And do you really think they are going to do that, Fred?" questioned Ethel.

"Why, it is not at all improbable," I replied. "There is no doubt it will be done all right if the people once come to realize the advantage to be derived from a model city."

"A sort of a new Utopia."

"Yes, which would become the harbinger of better days and upon which future civilization would pattern itself."

"Would we have to go and live there, too, Daddy?" Billy boy wanted to know—Billy was quite a big boy now.

"Not yet, son, but there is no telling."

"I wonder what next?" queried Ethel again.

"Well, I don't know," I replied, "unless some more of Hirsch Starmanow's prophecies come true."

"And what are they, dear?"

"Why, one was 'that some day the children of this earth will find the secret of their troubles and easily dispose of them.' "

"Let us hope so, dear."

"I am with you there every time, sweetheart."

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